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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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French rail lines sabotaged hrs before Olympics

PARIS, 26 JULY

Hours away from the grand opening ceremony of the Olympics, high-speed rail traffic to the French capital was severely disrupted on Friday by what officials described as "criminal actions" and sabotage.

The incidents paralysed several high-speed lines linking Paris to the rest of France and to neighbouring countries, according to Transport Minister Patrice Vergriete.

Speaking on BFM television, Vergriete described people fleeing from the scene of fires and the discovery of incendiary devices at the site. "Everything indicates that these are criminal fires," he said.

As Paris authorities geared up for a parade along the Seine River amid tightened security, three fires were reported near the tracks on the high-speed lines of Atlantique, Nord and Est. The disruptions particularly affected Paris' major Montparnasse station. Videos posted on social networks showed the hall of the station saturated with travellers.

The Paris police prefecture "concentrated its personnel in Parisian train stations" after the "massive attack" that paralysed the TGV high-speed network, Laurent Nuñez, the Paris police chief, told France Info television.

Travel to and from London beneath the English Channel, to neighbouring Belgium, and across the west, north, and east of France was affected by what the French national rail company SNCF called a series of coordinated overnight incidents. Government officials denounced the acts, though they said there was no immediate sign of a direct link to the Olympics. National police said authorities were investigating the incidents. French media reported a major fire on a busy western route. Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera said authorities were working to "evaluate the impact on travellers, athletes, and ensure the transport of all delegations to the competition sites" for the Olympics. "Playing against the Games is playing against France, against your own camp, against your country." She did not identify who was behind the vandalism," she added.

—AP

>>>More on Page 8

Security personnel patrol on the Seine river in front of the Conciergerie in Paris, before the opening ceremony of 2024 Olympics **PHOTO: PTI**

- 117 Indians are competing in 16 sports
- 329 gold medal events
- USD 50,000 for each gold medal-list
- Mascot is Phryge, inspired by Phrygian hats
- Motto is "Alone we go faster, but together we go further."

'Boop' added to Cambridge Dictionary

LONDON, 26 JULY

Informal words used as slang, such as 'boop' and 'the ick', are among more than 3,200 new words and phrases added to the 'Cambridge Dictionary' in its latest update this week. Boop, which is defined as "a gentle hit or touch on a person's or animal's nose or head, showing that you like them or as a joke"; 'the ick', which refers to "a sudden feeling that you dislike someone or something or are no longer attracted to someone because of something they do", and 'Chef's kiss', a movement in which you put your fingers and thumb together, kiss them, then pull your hand away from your lips as a way of showing that you think that something or someone is perfect or excellent, is another such informal phrase that has been recognised formally.

—PTI

Ramanagara district is now Bengaluru South

The renaming move shows Cong's hatred for Ram, says BJP

BENGALURU, 26 JULY

The Karnataka Cabinet on Friday decided to rename neighbouring Ramanagara district as 'Bengaluru South'.

The proposal to rename the district consisting of Ramanagara, Magadi, Kanakapura, Channapatna and Harohalli taluks had gained steam recently with a Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar-led delegation meeting the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and submitting him a memorandum to raise the pitch.

"We have decided to rename Ramanagara district as Bengaluru South....It is being done keeping in mind 'Brand Bengaluru' and based on the demand of the people there. The Revenue Department will start the process," Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H K Patil said.

D K Shivakumar **PHOTO: PTI**

Briefing reporters after the Cabinet meeting, chaired by the Chief Minister, he said: "Only the name of the district will change, remaining all names (of taluks) will remain the same."

Ramanagara town, about 50 kms from here, will remain as the headquarters of the renamed district.

"People of Ramanagara want to come under Brand Bengaluru. It is the opinion of people, people of the district and certain prominent personalities of the district that they want Brand Bengaluru," he said in response to a question.

Ramanagara is the home district of Shivakumar, who is also the state Congress chief. He represents Kanakapura Assembly segment in the district, and had first mooted the proposal in October last year.

Move shows Cong's hatred for Lord Ram: BJP

BJP national Spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla alleged that the Congress government in the state is mired in several scams, including the one linked to the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA), but instead of addressing them and people's problems, it has changed the name of Ramanagara district.

—PTI

Brindavan Gardens to be developed at a cost of ₹2,663cr

BENGALURU, 26 JULY

The Karnataka Cabinet on Friday gave its approval for a proposal to upgrade Brindavan Gardens at the bottom of the Krishna Raja Sagara (KRS) dam, across the river Cauvery in Mandya district, at an estimated cost of Rs 2,663 crore.

The upgradation work will be taken up under Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) model. The project envisages beautification of the gardens and promotion of tourism-related activities in 198 acres at the bottom of the KRS dam.

—PTI

BJP, JD(S) recipients of MUDA, says govt

BENGALURU, 26 JULY

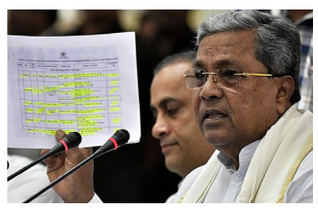
Urban Development Minister Byrathi Suresh has named six prominent members from BJP and JD(S) who allegedly received alternative sites from Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA). This comes amid ongoing allegations of irregularities in land allotments by the authority.

Among those named from the JD(S) in the list by the ministerare Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel HD Kumaraswamy, MLC CN Manjegowda, MLA GT Devegowda and MLA Sa Ra Mahesh. From BJP, H Vishwanath and Mahadevaswamy were mentioned.

Addressing the allegations raised against him by BJP-JD(S), Siddaramaiah defended the allocations and produced letters written by Kumaraswamy to MUDA in 2000, 2017, and 2019, requesting alternative sites. Siddaramaiah said, "If Kumaraswamy can request alternative land, why can't we?"

Meanwhile, Siddaramaiah said a panel headed by Justice PN Desai, a Judge of High Court of Karnataka, is investigating the case.

—Salar News



Chief Minister Siddaramaiah addressing a press conference **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Limbavali says BJP failed as Oppn

Former BJP MLA, Arvind Limbavali, has hit out at his party and said that its leaders "completely failed as the Opposition in this [legislature] session". Taking to X, the former MLS said, "BJP, which was supposed to be the voice of the people by pointing out the failures of government has totally failed in doing it as an Ipposition party. Although there was an opportunity, they have completely failed to seize this opportunity." —Salar News

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KARGIL VIJAY DIWAS

Students mark Kargil Vijay Diwas at the War Memorial in Bengaluru on Friday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Interim stay extended on nameplate order

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

The Supreme Court on Friday extended till further orders its interim direction staying the directives of BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Madhya Pradesh which effectively ensured that 'Kanwar Yatra' goes on without displaying the names of owners, staff and other details of eateries along the route.

The Kanwar Yatra began on 22 July and ends on 6 August.

A large number of devotees travel from various places with 'kanwars' carrying holy water from the Ganga to perform 'jalabhishek' of Shivlings during the Hindu calendar month of 'Shravan'. Many believers shun consuming meat during the month they consider holy. Many don't even consume meals containing onions and garlic. A bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and SVN Bhatti said it won't issue any clarification on the 22 July order as "we have said what needed to be said in our 22 July order. Can't force anyone to disclose names."

"List the matter on 5 August, 2024. In the meantime, interim order passed by this court on 22 July, 2024 shall continue," the bench said in its order.

The bench asked the Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand governments to file their response to the pleas challenging their directives. It also allowed the petitioners to file their responses to the replies of the state governments.

—PTI

Supreme Court **PHOTO: PTI**

Haridwar: Cloth sheets hung to cover mosques

Haridwar, 26 July

Facades of two mosques and a mazar along the kanwar yatra route in Uttarakhand's Haridwar city were on Friday covered with large sheets of white cloth to "prevent trouble" but were removed by the evening after objections from various quarters. The mosque's maulana said they were not aware of any administrative order in this regard —PTI

PM says Pakistan using terrorism to stay relevant

DRAS, 26 JULY

In a stern warning to Islamabad on the 25th anniversary of India's victory in the Kargil conflict, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said Pakistan has been trying to stay relevant by using terrorism and proxy wars and Indian soldiers will crush all terror attempts with full force.

Addressing a ceremony at the Kargil memorial in Dras, Modi said "falsehood and terror" were brought down to their knees by the truth in the 1999 war. He also noted that Pakistan has not learnt anything from its past.

Condemning terrorism, Modi said Pakistan has always faced defeat in the past and asserted that the evil intentions of terrorists will never be fulfilled.

—PTI

Narendra Modi **PHOTO: PTI**

1,600T of lithium deposits found in Mandya, Yadgir

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

Lithium deposits have been found in Mandya and Yadgiri districts, said Jitendra Singh, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Earth Sciences in Rajya Sabha. Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD), a constituent unit of Department of Atomic Energy, has found the presence of the Lithium resources, the minister said. AMD has established 1,600 tonnes (G3 stage) of Lithium resources in Marlagalla area, Mandya district, and preliminary surveys and limited subsurface exploration have been carried out in Yadgir district to know about the deposits, he informed the House.

—ANI

700-YR-OLD BURIAL SYSTEM

Assam's 'Moidams' now a UNESCO site

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

The mound-burial system of the Ahom dynasty in Assam -- 'Moidams' -- was on Friday included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, making it the first cultural property from the Northeast to get the coveted tag.

The decision was taken during the ongoing 46th session of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) being held in India.

'Moidams' was submitted as India's nomination for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List for the year 2023-24. In a post on X, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said it was a matter of "immense joy and pride" for India that 'Moidams' had made it to the WHC list

The unique burial mounds, represented by pyramid-like structures known as 'Moidams', were used by the Tai-Ahom dynasty that ruled Assam for around 600 years.

'Moidams' are vaulted chambers (chow-chali), often double-storied, that has an arched passage for entry. Atop the hemispherical mud mounds, layers of bricks and earth are laid. The base of the mound is reinforced by a polygonal toe-wall and an arched gateway on the west, according to the UNESCO website.

Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said it is a day "etched in golden letters" and thanked UNESCO, the World Heritage Committee for understanding the outstanding universal value of 'Moidams'.

The session of the WHC will examine 27 nominations from across the world, including 19 cultural sites, four natural sites and two mixed sites.

—PTI

The decision was taken during the ongoing 46th session of the World Heritage Committee **PHOTO: X/@MRINAL_MLA**

US INTRODUCES BILL TO STRENGTHEN US-INDIA TIES

WASHINGTON, 26 JULY

US Senator Marco Rubio on Thursday introduced a bill in Congress which proposes to treat India on par with its allies like as Japan, Israel, Korea and NATO allies regarding technology transfers, support India in its response to growing threats to its territorial integrity and bar Pakistan from receiving security assistance if it is found to have sponsored terrorism against India.

This is for the first time such an India-centric bill has been introduced in the US Congress that proposes to put India at the same level of that of its treaty ally.

—PTI

PHOTO: FB

Shalini Rajneesh to be new Chief Secretary of State

BENGALURU, 26 JULY

Shalini Rajneesh will be the new Chief Secretary of Karnataka, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil said on Friday. The 1989-batch IAS officer will succeed her husband and outgoing Chief Secretary Rajneesh Goel, who is scheduled to retire on 31 July. The first couple to hold the post in Karnataka were BK Bhattacharya and his wife Teresa Bhattacharya more than two decades ago. Shalini was the woman topper of the 1989 IAS batch, according to official sources. A Ph.D. in Rural Development, she has penned several books covering various subjects like Management, Personality Development, and Women Empowerment. *—PTI*

Landslide, tree fall on Goa-Karnataka border affect trains

PANAJI, 26 JULY

The movement of five trains was affected on South Western Railway due to a landslide between Dudhsagar and Sonaulim sections on Goa-Karnataka border shortly after Thursday midnight, an official said on Friday. The track was also closed after a tree fell between Londa and Tinaighat (Karnataka side of the border) affecting the overhead power supply. South Western Railway's Chief Public Relations Officer Manjunath Kanamadi said both incidents were reported at 12.55 am on Friday, and the train traffic resumed around 6am after clearing the debris and the fallen tree. Train No 17310, which arrived at 1am at Sonaulim was backed to Kulem station (in Goa), while Train No 17419 was regulated at Londa (Karnataka) from 1.40am. *—PTI*

3 assault women for plucking tomatoes, booked

CHIKKABALLAPUR, 26 JULY

Three people have been booked for allegedly assaulting two women who plucked tomatoes from their farms at Gajalahalli village in Chintamani. On 12 July, 65-year-old Shanthmma and Shoba, who were working as labourers at a farm, plucked a few tomatoes from a nearby farm for a group of children. Enraged by this, the farm owner, Sudarshan, along with his family members Subramani and Narayanaswamy attacked Shanthmma and her daughter with sticks and hurled caste abuses at them. Initially, Chintamani Rural Police were hesitant to register a case as village elders were attempting to mediate between the parties. However, on 24 July, police registered an FIR against the trio. *—Salar News*

HC adjourns POCSO case against BSY for a week

BENGALURU, 26 JULY

Karnataka High Court on Friday adjourned for a week former chief minister BS Yediyurappa's petition to quash the POCSO case registered against him. Yediyurappa had approached the High Court against his arrest following a case registered against him under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. The High Court restrained the police from taking any precipitative action against BJP veteran. On Friday, the High Court adjourned the matter for a week. Yediyurappa got relief for a week from the arrest. A woman complained to police saying Yediyurappa sexually harassed her 17-year-old daughter when they went to meet him to address grievances. *—PTI*

CM rebuts Oppn charge in MUDA 'scam', denies role

'Will give a report to Governor as everything is legal'

BENGALURU, 26 JULY

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday defended the alleged fraudulent allotment of sites to land losers by Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA), including to his wife Parvathi, and asserted that neither he nor his family has any role in it.

Siddaramaiah also said Governor Thaawar Chand Gehlot has sought a report from the government regarding the alleged irregularities in MUDA and a report will be sent "as everything is totally legal."

Responding to charges questioning the legality of 3.16 acres of his wife's land that was acquired by MUDA, he said, BJP and JD(S) say this land attracts provisions of Karnataka Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prohibition of Transfer of Certain Lands) Act, known as the PTCL Act, which is "totally false", as Ninga alias Jawara, the earlier owner of the land, had purchased it through auction in 1935.

The 3.16 acres is a "self-acquired" property, which later came to Ninga's third son Devaraj and he became the absolute owner of the property with the consent of other family members and siblings, he said. From him, Mallikarjuna Swamy (CM's wife Parvathi's brother) acquired this land. "As this is a self-acquired property and not a grant by the government, it doesn't attract PTCL Act."

This land was acquired by MUDA and a final notification was issued in 1997. The CM said that based on Devaraj's application the land was subsequently denotified. In 2004, Devaraj sold the property to Mallikarjuna Swamy and in 2005, it was converted from agricultural land to non-agricultural, he said, adding, in 2010 Mallikarjuna Swamy gifted the land to his sister Parvathi.

MUDA subsequently, without the consent of the land owner, formed sites on it and distributed them to others, following which Parvathi moved an application to MUDA in 2014 seeking alternative sites instead of her land utilised by it illegally, he said.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Friday charged BJP with levelling allegations against Siddaramaiah as part of its "conspiracy" against the Congress government. "Karnataka is the biggest State for the Congress party. BJP had never thought that Congress would win here. So, they are hatching a conspiracy against the government." *—Salar News/PTI*

Siddaramaiah chronicles land allotment to his family

Parvathi, purchases the 3-acre agricultural land of Devaraju

1984: MUDA denotifies around 235 acres in 13 places

1992: MUDA issues preliminary notification to acquire the 235 acres

1996: Mysuru resident J Devaraju gets around 3 acres of the 235 acres

1997: MUDA passes a resolution to exclude Devarajau's parcel from land acquisition and gives a report to the government. MUDA restructures the 235 acres into 19 parts

1998: State government says the 235 acres acquired by MUDA is not complete unless land compensation is provided

2004: BM Mallikarjun, brother of Siddaramaiah's wife were acquired

2005: Mallikarjun converts his land parcel from agricultural to residential and gifts it to Parvathi

2015: MUDA divides the 235 acres into 59 plots and distributes them to people without issuing a notice

2017: MUDA passes a resolution saying it had erred and not provided alternative sites to people whose land parcels were acquired

2017: Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi files a complaint with MUDA about unauthorised allotment of her land and requests to provide alternative land

2021: Siddaramaiah's wife submits applications for providing alternative land

2024: Siddaramiah dismisses BJP's allegation that he demanded a specific alternative plot.

– Salar News

BJP MPs from Karnataka protest against State government during Monsoon Session of Parliament, in New Delhi on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

Karnataka BJP MPs protest in Parliament

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

State BJP members protested on Parliament premises in New Delhi on Friday against the alleged scams at Mysore Urban Development Authority and Maharshi Valmiki Schedule Tribe Development Corporation.

Former Minister and MP Basvaraj Bommai told ANI that Congress has looted Rs 1,087 crore from the people in the Valmiki corporation case. He questioned what Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi was doing when the money of the Dalits was being looted. "Such looting can only be done by Congress party," he said.

Bommai said, "If they are right, let them allow CBI to investigate." BJP MP Jagadish Shettar said, "All the leaders of the Opposition have been demanding a discussion, but it has been denied, which shows Congress is the culprit," he said.

Brijesh Chowta, another MP from Karnataka said "The government led by Siddaramiah is the worst government in the history of Karnataka."

Union Minister Prahlad Joshi said, "The level of corruption which has been taking place in Karnataka is horrible." *—ANI*

BJP raises 'corruption' in State at Rajya Sabha

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

Rajya Sabha on Friday witnessed noisy scenes during Zero Hour after Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar rejected notices by ruling party members to suspend listed business of the House to discuss an issue related to corruption in Karnataka, but allowed a BJP member to raise the matter.

Treasury members were on their feet to protest the rejection of the notices under Rule 267 of procedure and conduct of business of Rajya Sabha, while Opposition, mainly Congress MPs, objected to Chair's permission to BJP's Iranna Kadadi to raise the issue of corruption in Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation as part of his Zero Hour mention. Kadadi, Brij Lal, Naresh Bansal and Sudhanshu Trivedi of BJP had given the notices. *—PTI*

When Kruthi Kumari was attacked in Koramangala, the hostel inmates were out of their wits as to how to save the victim *PHOTO: VIDEOGRAB*

3 teams formed to nab murder accused

BENGALURU 26 JULY

City police have formed three teams to nab a Bhopal native who murdered a 24-year-old woman at a paying guest accommodation in Koramangala on Tuesday night.

After stabbing Bihar native Kruthi Kumari, Abhishek turned off his mobile phone and fled. The police teams have been dispatched to Bhopal and other parts of Madhya Pradesh, City Police Commissioner B Dayananda said on Friday.

Investigations revealed that Abhishek was in a relationship with Kumari's friend and colleague, whose name has been withheld by police. Abhishek was a frequent visitor to the PG accommodation and travelled often from Bhopal to Bengaluru to see his girlfriend. However, the relationship deteriorated, and Kumari and her friends cut off all ties with Abhishek.

Kumari helped her friend move to a new PG accommodation and avoided Abhishek's calls.

Upset by this, Abhishek visited the PG facility where Kumari was staying and stabbed her.

Police reviewed the CCTV footage of the murder at VR Layout. When Kumari was attacked, the hostel inmates were scared and out of their wits as to how to save the victim, police said.

The footage showed Abhishek walking towards Kumari's room with a plastic bag in his hand. He entered the room and, minutes later, dragged Kumari out as she tried to escape his grip. He pulled her by the neck and repeatedly stabbed her. *—Salar News*

Truth will be out in 15-20 days: Suraj

MYSURU, 26 JULY

JD(S) Member of Legislative Council Suraj Revanna, who is facing charges of sexually assaulting some men and is out on bail, said on Friday that in 15 to 20 days all those who were part of the conspiracy against him and his family will be exposed. "We have not done anything wrong. That's why we all are so confident. All the questions will be answered. Time alone will give the answer. The truth cannot be hidden for long," Suraj, grandson of former prime minister HD Deve Gowda, said after praying to Goddess Chamundeshwari here in Mysuru.

About his pilgrimage to Chamundi Hills, the JD(S) MLC said it is a family tradition that every year he along with his parents and other family members pay a visit to Chamundeshwari temple to worship the goddess. Suraj was released on bail just two days ago in the sexual assault case. He was arrested based on a complaint by a JD(S) worker who alleged that the MLC sexually assaulted him.

MLC Suraj Revanna *PHOTO: X*

Suraj Revanna was released on bail just two days ago in the sexual assault case. He was arrested based on a complaint by a JD(S) worker who alleged that the MLC sexually assaulted him.

Suraj's younger brother Prajwal Revanna, who is also facing allegations of sexual assault on several women, is in jail.

Their parents HD Revanna and Bhavani Revanna are also on bail. They face the charge of allegedly abducting a woman who had figured in one of the huge cache of videos that came into the public domain ahead of the Lok Sabha election, and was seen being tied up and raped, allegedly by Prajwal Revanna. *—PTI*

Kidwai hosp performs 1st Paediatric Allogeneic bone marrow transplant

BENGALURU 26 JULY

Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology (KMIO) on Friday successfully completed its first Paediatric Allogeneic Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT) through matched sibling donor. The procedure was performed on a 14-year-old patient, Archana (name changed), who was suffering from Acute Myeloid Leukaemia, a type of blood cancer.

Archana was admitted to the Kidwai hospital about two months ago. Her treatment was supported by her mother's Employees' State Insurance scheme. Despite the refractory nature of her cancer, which made it resistant to conventional chemotherapy and posed a high risk of relapse, Archana's prognosis improved when it was discovered that her younger brother was a complete genetic match (12/12 HLA match).

- The procedure was performed on a 14-year-old patient, who was suffering from Acute Myeloid Leukaemia, a type of blood cancer.

Dr Vasundhara Kailasnath, a paediatric BMT physician at KMIO, and her team opted for a high-dose chemotherapy regimen followed by an Allogeneic BMT using stem cells from Archana's brother. Dr Sharan Prakash Patil, Medical Education and Skill Development Minister, said Archana is currently disease-free.

Minister Patil said stem cell transplantations fall into two categories: Autologous (using the patient's own stem cells) and Allogeneic (using donor stem cells). In private hospitals, Autologous transplants cost between Rs 7 and Rs 15 lakh, while Allogeneic BMTs range from Rs 15 to Rs 30 lakh. KMIO provides these procedures at minimal cost by utilising funds from PM Relief Fund, CM Relief Fund, SCP/TSP scheme, ESI and CGHS schemes. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

MINISTER: TRACK DENGUE-INFECTED FOR 14 DAYS

BENGALURU, 26 JULY

Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao on Friday instructed officials to monitor dengue-infected people for 14 days and urged Bengaluru civic body and Health Department officials to take all preventive measures to control the vector-borne disease in the City.

Rao visited the dengue hot spots in Yelahanka here and said more attention is being paid to control the disease in the City. "Dengue cases have declined in some districts. Of the total dengue cases in the State, Bengaluru accounts for 50 per cent," he said.

Rao said they are expecting to see a decline in dengue cases from next month. Deputy Director-level officers will be sent to dengue hot spots in 10 districts from Monday.

According to the bulletin shared by the health department, 16,038 people tested positive for dengue from 1 January to 25 July. Of these, 12,709 people have recovered, 3,319 are active cases, 2,655 are under home care and 641 are hospitalised. The vector-borne disease has so far claimed 10 lives in the state this year.

The Health Minister said no cases of Nipah virus have been detected in the State. Since it has been reported in Kerala, caution needs to be taken in areas bordering the neighbouring state. "We have issued an advisory to those travelling from the state to Kerala to be careful. Travel only if necessary," he said. *—PTI*

GROOMING NEXT-GEN

Youth Cong to hold membership drive; polls in Aug, Sept

BENGALURU, 26 JULY

Karnataka Youth Congress will conduct a membership drive and internal elections in August and September, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said on Friday.

The membership drive will run from 16 August to 16 September, inviting individuals under 35 years of age to register online, Shivakumar said at Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee's office here. Newly registered members will be eligible to vote in the elections at the taluk, district and state levels. "The membership drive and elections are crucial for developing grassroots leaders in Youth Congress," Shivakumar said. "These elections will also be conducted at the national level."

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and others at the announcement of membership drive in Bengaluru on Friday. *PHOTO: X/@DKShivakumar*

Nominations for the elections have started, and candidates can submit their papers till 2 August. The nominations will be reviewed from 3 to 8 August, and final candidatures will be announced on 9 August. The candidate securing the highest votes will be elected as the President, while other winners will be assigned various posts.

In a bid to ensure inclusivity, Youth Congress has implemented reservations for women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and minorities. Districts such as Ballari, Mandya, Bagalkot, Belagavi and Bengaluru Central will be reserved for SC/ST candidates.

Shivakumar also announced plans to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's presidency of Indian National Congress. A committee led by HK Patil, with Veerappa Moily as an advisor and BL Shankar as coordinator, will organise events on it. *—Salar News*

Senior BJP leader Prabhat Jha passes away at 67

BHOPAL, 26 JULY

BJP leader Prabhat Jha passed away at a hospital in Delhi on Friday morning at the age of 67 years. He was sick for a long time. Jha was born on 4 June, 1957 at Hariharpur, Darbhanga district in Bihar. He served as Madhya Pradesh BJP president from 8 May, 2010 to 15 December, 2012. He was elected as the member of Rajya Sabha from Madhya Pradesh in April 2008. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his grief and offered condolences on the passing away of senior BJP leader and former MP Prabhat Jha. He said that Prabhat Jha had played an active role in strengthening the organisation. He also highlighted his contributions to public service, the field of journalism and writing. Earlier, Home Minister Amit Shah and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav paid condolences to Prbhat Jha. *—PTI*

Congress activist 'thrashed' to death in Bengal

JALPAIGURI, 26 JULY

A Congress activist died on Thursday after being allegedly tied to a tree and thrashed by a group of people at Moinaguri in West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district, officials said. Manik Roy was allegedly beaten with iron rods and sticks over some dispute with his neighbours on Wednesday night, they said. He was rescued by a police team from Moinaguri and taken to Jalpaiguri Super Speciality Hospital in a critical condition, the officials said. His family members and WBPCC president Adhir Chowdhury claimed that some of the assailants belonged to the ruling Trinamool Congress. Five persons were arrested on Thursday in connection with the incident. Roy's wife alleged that he had been receiving death threats for some time. Meanwhile, TMC leader Kunal Ghosh told PTI it was an unfortunate incident and none of those involved should be spared. Any attempt to politicise this should be denounced. *—PTI*

RaGa appears before UP court in defamation case

SULTANPUR, 26 JULY

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi appeared before the MP-MLA court on Friday for a hearing in a defamation case. The court fixed 12 August as the next date of hearing in the matter when the statement of the petitioner will be recorded. Court sources said Gandhi need not appear in the court again on that date. Congress district president Abhishek Singh Rana confirmed that Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, appeared in the court. Local Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Vijay Mishra filed a defamation case on August 4, 2018, against Gandhi for making alleged objectionable remarks against the then BJP president and current Home Minister Amit Shah. The court granted bail to Gandhi in this case on 20 February. *—PTI*

RJD's Sunil Kumar expelled from Bihar Legislative Council

PATNA, 26 JULY

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Sunil Kumar Singh was expelled from the Bihar Legislative Council on Friday, following an incident of unruly behaviour in the House earlier this year. The motion for Singh's expulsion was passed by voice vote, a day after the Ethics Committee submitted its report to acting chairman Awadhesh Narain Singh. Singh, a close aide of RJD president Lalu Prasad and his family, was charged with raising slogans against Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on 13 February, during a heated exchange in the House. In addition to Singh's expulsion, another RJD Member of the Legislative Council (MLC), Mohd Qari Sohaib, who also engaged in disruptive behaviour on the same day, has been suspended for two days. This decision came on the final day of the monsoon session. *—PTI*

PM TARGETS OPPN OVER AGNIPATH; OPPN HITS BACK

Opposition accuses PM of indulging in 'petty politics'

DRASS, 26 JULY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said Agnipath scheme is an example of necessary reforms undertaken by the Army and accused the Opposition of playing politics over the recruitment process aimed at keeping the average age in armed forces young.

In his address on Kargil Vijay Diwas here to mark the 25th anniversary of victory in Kargil war, Modi said some people were playing politics over a sensitive issue related to national security and rubbished claims that the Agnipath scheme was launched to save pension money.

"Unfortunately, such a sensitive issue related to national security has been made a subject of politics by some people. Some people are playing politics of lies for their personal interests even on this reform of the army," he said.

Hitting out at the Opposition, Modi said, "These are the same people who weakened our forces by committing scams worth thousands of crores in the forces."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi carries out the 'first blast' for the construction of the Shinkun La tunnel that aims to provide all-weather connectivity between Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh during a programme to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Kargil Vijay Diwas at the Kargil War Memorial, in Dras, on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

Meanwhile, Opposition parties slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday over his claims concerning the Agnipath scheme while paying tribute to martyrs on Kargil Vijay Diwas and demanded a review of the scheme.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and other party leaders accused the prime minister of indulging in "petty politics" over the Agnipath issue and said the prime minister's remarks that his government implemented the scheme at the behest of the Army was a "blatant lie".

"It is very unfortunate and deplorable that Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji is doing petty politics even on occasions like paying tribute to martyrs on Kargil Vijay Diwas. No Prime Minister has ever done this before," Kharge said.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh accused Modi of "lying" even on Kargil Vijay Diwas. *—PTI*

'PROJECT INDIA 2047'

PM to chair NITI Aayog Council meet today

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair NITI Aayog's 9th Governing Council meeting on 27 July, which will focus on making India a developed nation by 2047, an official statement said on Friday.

The council, the apex body of NITI Aayog, includes all State Chief Ministers, Lieutenant Governors of Union Territories, and several Union Ministers. Modi is the chairman of NITI Aayog.

The Governing Council Meeting on 27 July, 2024 will discuss the Approach Paper for the Vision Document on Viksit Bharat @2047. The meeting will also see detailed deliberations on the role of states in achieving the goal of Viksit Bharat @2047, the statement said.

During the conference, recommendations were made on five key themes--drinking water: access, quantity, and quality; electricity: quality, efficiency, and reliability; health: accessibility, affordability, and quality of care; schooling access and quality and land and property: accessibility, digitization, registration, and mutation.

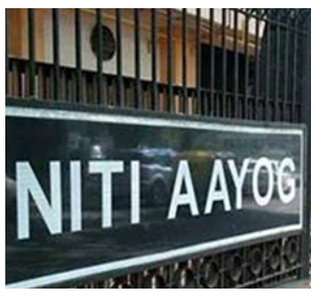


PHOTO: PTI

Meanwhile, Chief Ministers of three Congress-ruled states -- Karnataka's Siddaramaiah, Himachal Pradesh's Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu and Telangana's Revanth Reddy -- have announced they will not attend the NITI Aayog meeting over alleged bias against their states in the Union Budget.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK leader MK Stalin, Kerala's Chief Minister and CPI(M) leader Pinnarayi Vijayan as well as Aam Aadmi Party-led Punjab and Delhi governments have also boycotted the meeting. *—PTI*

BJP names state in-charges, presidents

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

BJP on Friday appointed its Rajya Sabha member and national general secretary Radha Mohan Das Agrawal as the party's in charge for Rajasthan, and former Lok Sabha MP Harish Dwivedi as its in charge for Assam.

In a statement, the party said its national president JP Nadda has made Arvind Menon, a national secretary, and former MP Rajdeep Roy in charge for Tamil Nadu and Tripura respectively.

Menon has been reassigned the responsibility he already held.

Former BJP women morcha chief Vijaya Rahatkar will be the co-incharge of the organisational affairs in Rajasthan and Sudhakar Reddy in Tamil Nadu.

Among other appointments,

PHOTO: PTI

the party named Bihar minister Dilip Kumar Jaiswal its state president, replacing Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary.

Rajya Sabha MP Madan Rathore was named its Rajasthan unit president in place of C P Joshi.

Choudhary had been heading the Bihar unit of the BJP since March last year. *—PTI*

NTA declares final results of NEET-UG

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

National Testing Agency on Friday announced the final results of the controversy-ridden medical entrance exam NEET-UG, officials said.

The results were declared following directive from the Supreme Court after taking into account marks of a physics question, which NTA had said has two correct answers.

"The re-revised score cards are live now," a senior NTA official said.

Forty-four out of the 67 candidates who were earlier declared toppers had scored full marks because of the marks awarded for that particular physics question. The number of toppers was later reduced to 61 with the agency withdrawing grace marks awarded to six candidates to make up for loss of time at few exam centres. *—PTI*

HC: Didi can make statements about Guv conforming to law

KOLKATA, 26 JULY

Calcutta High Court on Friday directed that West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee can make statements regarding State Governor CV Ananda Bose as long as they conform to the laws.

Banerjee and TMC leader Kunal Ghosh moved an appeal before a division bench challenging an interim order by a single bench directing Banerjee and three others not to make any defamatory or incorrect statement against Bose.

Modifying the single bench order, a division bench presided by Justice IP Mukerji directed that Banerjee and Ghosh will be free to make statements regarding the Governor as long as they conform to the laws of the land and are not defamatory.

This freedom is, however, subject to reasonable restrictions, the bench said. *—PTI*

GOVT RELEASES DATA

Explore chance to table Shah Commission report: Dhankhar

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday asked the government to explore the possibility of placing an authentic copy of the Shah Commission report on Emergency excesses on the table of the House, as it had investigated the "darkest period of democracy".

The Shah Commission report relates to atrocities committed during the Emergency imposed in 1975.

During the Zero Hour, Dhankhar asked the government to take note of the issue raised by Deepak Prakash, a BJP MP from Jharkhand, regarding the matter relating to the Shah Commission report.

"The government must examine the possibility of having the authentic report (of Shah Commission) and place it on the table of the House for the benefit of the members and public at large," he said.

Earlier raising the issue, Prakash said, the Shah Commission, which was set up in 1977, conducted 100 sittings and evaluated 48,000 documents. The final report was presented on 6 August, 1978. This report was published in three volumes.

He demanded that the Shah Commission report should be made public. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

633 students died abroad in last 5 years

Six-hundred and thirty-three incidents of death of Indian students abroad were reported in the last five years due to various reasons including natural causes with Canada topping the list with 172 cases, the government said in Lok Sabha on Friday. Separately, a total 19 Indian students died abroad due to attacks. *—PTI*

628 tigers died in past 5 years

A total of 628 tigers died in India during the past five years due to natural causes and other reasons, including poaching, according to government data. Meanwhile, 349 people were killed in tiger attacks with Maharashtra alone recording 200 deaths. The number of tiger deaths in 2023 is also the highest since 2012. *—PTI*

Cancer cases rising by 2.5% every year: Nadda

The government makes all efforts to ensure affordable and accessible treatment is available for cancer patients amid a rise in cases in India, Health Minister JP Nadda said on Friday. "The number of cancer cases is going up, it is increasing by almost 2.5 per cent every year," Nadda said. In men, cases of oral and lung cancer are on the up while more women are getting breast cancer, he added. More than 15.5 lakh cancer cases are being registered every year, Nadda said. *—PTI*

2,500 people died in human-elephant conflicts in 5 yrs

Human-elephant conflicts resulted in 2,853 human deaths during the past five years, with the number of fatalities reaching a five-year high of 628 in 2023, according to government data. The data presented in the Rajya Sabha revealed that Odisha recorded 624 such deaths during this period, followed by Jharkhand with 474, West Bengal with 436, Assam with 383, Chhattisgarh with 303, Tamil Nadu with 256, Karnataka with 160 and Kerala with 124. Union Minister of State for Environment Kirti Vardhan Singh on Thursday said "elephants caused" 587 human deaths in 2019, 471 in 2020, 557 in 2021, 610 in 2022 and 628 in 2023. —PTI

CM Naidu releases white paper on Andhra's economy

AMARAVATI, 26 JULY

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday alleged that the five-year rule by the YSRCP had destroyed the state's economy, which led to a loss of up to Rs 7 lakh crore revenue.

The Chief Minister claimed that agriculture sector growth had declined from 16 per cent between 2014 and 2019 during the previous TDP government to 10.3 per cent under the YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government.

Meanwhile, YSRCP chief Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy whom Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu compared to Pablo Escobar, threw the ball back into the TDP chief's court on Friday when he asked mockingly if Naidu had been a friend of the late Colombian drug lord. Reddy asked, "Is he Chandrababu's friend that he knows his name so well?. *—PTI*

NSA DOYAL DELIVERS INDIA'S STATEMENT AT BIMSTEC MEET

NAYPYIDAW, 26 JULY

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval on Friday called on BIMSTEC nations to strengthen cooperation in counter-terrorism; combating drug trafficking, arms smuggling and organised crime.

Doval, leading the Indian delegation at the 4th annual meeting of the security chiefs of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), delivered India's national statement at the meeting in Myanmarese capital.

The meeting has been convened to strategise and coordinate initiatives crucial for addressing common security challenges faced by member states. *—PTI*

FROM CENTRE, WB & KERALA

SC seeks replies on bill assent denial

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

In a significant development, the Supreme Court on Friday agreed to consider the separate pleas of Opposition-ruled Kerala and West Bengal, alleging the denial of assent to bills passed by the respective legislative assemblies.

Kerala also alleged that Governor Arif Mohammed Khan referred certain bills to President Droupadi Murmu and those were yet to be cleared.

Taking note of the pleas, the top court issued notices to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the secretaries of Kerala Governor Khan and his West Bengal counterpart CV Ananda Bose and sought their replies within three weeks.

SC seeks replies within 3 weeks *PHOTO: PTI*

The bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice Manoj Misra also directed the Trinamool Congress-led West Bengal government to make the home ministry a party to the petition.

CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front government of Kerala moved the top court in March, alleging that certain bills cleared by the legislative assembly were referred to the president and these were still pending assent.

West Bengal, in its plea, alleged the governor was withholding assent on eight bills.

The bills awaiting consent of the governor are the West Bengal University Laws (Amendment) Bill, West Bengal University of Animal and Fishery Sciences (Amendment) Bill, West Bengal Private University Laws (Amendment) Bill, West Bengal Krishi Viswavidyalaya Laws, West Bengal University of Health Sciences (Amendment) Bill and the Aliah University (Amendment) Bill. . *—PTI*

SP's Akhilesh unveils 'Samvidhan Manstambh'

LUCKNOW, 26 JULY

A 'Samvidhan Manstambh' was established with a copy of the Constitution at the Samajwadi Party's headquarters in Lucknow on Friday.

Party chief Akhilesh Yadav unveiled the "Samvidhan Manstambh" in a simple ceremony at the Samajwadi Party headquarters in Lucknow.

The spirit of social justice was implemented on this day in the form of reservation, which later became the basic foundation of ensuring social justice as a people's right in the Constitution through the efforts of BR Ambedkar, and also the basic principle of establishing democracy in the country, he said.

In this context, what can be a more historic occasion than

PHOTO: PTI

the establishment of the "Samvidhan Manstambh", because the biggest and most effective example is the implementation of the idea in its true form, he added.

That is why today, on 26 July, the "Samvidhan Manstambh" will be established and a copy of the Constitution installed so that it always shines a light on social justice, the Samajwadi Party chief added. *—PTI*

In UP, 2 kanwariyas killed, 2 injured in accident

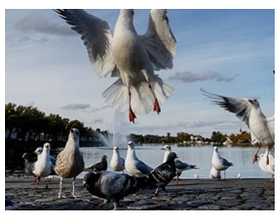
BIJNOR, 26 JULY

Two kanwariyas were killed and two injured in an accident in the Afzalgarh area of this Uttar Pradesh district, police said on Friday. Circle Officer (Afzalgarh) Anjani Kumar said the accident occurred around 2.30 on Friday when a group of 30 kanwariyas were on their way to Haridwar in Uttarakhand from Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly on their two-wheelers. During the journey, one of the two-wheelers collided with an unidentified vehicle and then hit another two-wheeler of the group, Kumar said. Four kanwariyas on the two-wheelers were injured and taken to a hospital where doctors declared Shivam, 24, and Akhilesh, 22, dead, the police said. Two others are undergoing treatment, they added. *—PTI*

CRPF jawan kills self in Jharkhand's Chatra

CHATRA, 26 JULY

A CRPF jawan allegedly shot himself dead in Jharkhand's Chatra district, police said on Friday. The jawan was identified as Ashish Kumar Singh, a resident of Uttar Pradesh and was posted in the Shila outpost. Around 11.30 pm on Thursday, Singh allegedly shot himself dead, Officer-in-Charge of Simaria police station Mayank Kumar said. The body has been sent to Sadar Hospital, Chatra for postmortem examination and further investigation was on, the police officer added. *—PTI*



Police, forest officials rescue 1,000 birds in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

Delhi government's forest department and the police rescued 1,000 birds, including exotic species, from the national capital's Kabutar Market, PETA India said on Friday. In a statement, the Indian branch of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) said thousands of birds, including Alexandrine parakeets, finches, and other species, were rescued after it complained to the forest department about two locked shops in the market that had numerous birds hidden inside. It also sought the intervention of former MP Maneka Gandhi, an animal rights activist. Acting on the complaint, a joint team from Jama Masjid police station and the forest department raided the shops and recovered the birds. The birds rescued were sent for health checks, treatment and temporary rehabilitation, PETA India said. *—PTI*

2 arrested for brandishing sword at MP school

SEHORE, 26 JULY

Two men have been arrested for allegedly brandishing a sword on the campus of a PM SHRI school and threatening boys and passing lewd remarks on girls in Madhya Pradesh's Sehore district, police said on Friday. The accused, Saurabh Shakya, 18 and Suhail Khan, 20, rode into the premises of the PM SHRI in Shyampur, about 25 km from the district headquarters, on a motorcycle on Wednesday, an official said. The duo, brandishing a sword, threatened boys and passed lewd remarks at girls before exiting the campus, Sehore rural area Sub Divisional Officer of Police Puja Sharma told PTI. The school principal lodged a complaint on Thursday after scanning the CCTV cameras installed on the campus, and the accused were arrested the same evening, she said. The accused have been booked under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POSCO) Act, Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita and Arms Act, the official said. *—PTI*

Affected people take shelter at a school after increase in water level of the Krishna river and inundation of its surrounding areas due to heavy rainfall, in Sangli district, Maharashtra; Panchaganga river started flowing above the danger mark in Kolhapur, Maharashtra; Commuters wade through a waterlogged road after rains, in New Delhi; People move their belongings in the aftermath of heavy rainfall in Pune, on Friday ***PHOTO: PTI***

RIVERS SWELL AMID HEAVY RAINS IN COUNTRY

4,000 people evacuated from Gujarat, Kolhapur; bridges, dams damaged in U'khand

NAVSARI/ KOLHAPUR/ SANGLI/ PUNE/ NEW DELHI/ NEW TEHRI, 26 JULY

More than 2,500 people were shifted out of their homes as several villages were inundated due to heavy rains in south Gujarat, officials said on Friday.

At least 2,200 people were relocated from villages and low-lying areas in Navsari, while 500 persons were evacuated in neighbouring Tapi district following heavy rains in 24 hours, they said.

Kolhapur, Maharashtra

More than 2,000 people were relocated from inundated areas as the Panchaganga river started flowing above the danger mark in western Maharashtra's Kolhapur district.

According to the Kolhapur district administration, the water level of the Panchaganga river at Rajaram Wier was 45.2 feet, well above the danger mark of 43 feet, at noon on Friday.

According to the district administration, six gates of the Radhanagari dam were opened, and the discharge was at 10068 cusecs.

Pune

Union Minister Murlidhar Mohol said information about the water discharge from Khadakwasla dam should have been given in advance to people living in the low-lying Sinhgad Road area, which experienced flooding as rains wreaked havoc in Pune.

Amid incessant showers in the catchment areas, the irrigation department discharged 35,000 cusecs of water from the Khadakwasla Dam, causing major flooding in Ekta Nagar, located adjacent to the Mutha River, in which the water was released.

Delhi

Early morning showers in Delhi caused waterlogging and disrupted traffic movement in several areas of the city, officials said.

The Delhi Traffic Police issued alerts informing commuters about the roads affected due to waterlogging and sewer overflow and asked them to take alternative routes.

Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand

Heavy overnight rain flooded the Balganga river in the Boodha Kedar area of Uttarakhand's Tehri Garhwal district on Friday with the river water gushing into homes, inundating fields and damaging roads and bridges.

However, there were no casualties as people living in houses close to the riverbanks quickly moved to safer locations, Dikshit added. *—PTI*

HC junks PIL against 'Samvidhan Hatya Diwas'

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

Delhi High Court on Friday dismissed a PIL challenging the Centre's decision to observe 25 June, the day the Emergency was imposed in 1975, as 'Samvidhan Hatya Diwas'.

A bench headed by Acting Chief Justice Manmohan rejected the petitioner's contention that the decision was not only in violation of the Constitution but also "insulting" as it used the word "hatya" (murder) with "Samvidhan" (Constitution), which is a "living document", and said it in no way showed any disrespect to the Constitution.

The court said the Centre's 12 July notification was not against the proclamation of Emergency but against the abuse of power, misuse of law and the excesses that followed, and was therefore not in violation of the Constitution or law.

PHOTO: PTI

Petitioner Samir Mailk's counsel contended that Emergency was declared in 1975 as per Article 352 of the Constitution of India and the decision to declare the day of the proclamation as 'Samvidhan Hatya Diwas' was derogatory and contrary to the constitutional provisions.

It was argued that the Constitution was a "living document" which cannot die. Observing 'Samvidhan Hatya Diwas' would also violate the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act. *—PTI*

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

SC slams officials over solid waste disposal in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

Supreme Court on Friday slammed the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and said there was a "sorry state of affairs" in the national capital regarding implementation of the Solid Waste Management Rules.

The apex court noted that the situation of solid waste disposal in Delhi might lead to a public health emergency as more than 3,000 tons of solid waste remained untreated daily in the national capital.

A bench of Justice AS Oka and Justice AG Masih observed that the national capital generated more than 11,000 tons of solid waste per day while the daily capacity of processing plants made available by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) was only 8,073 tons.

"We agree with the amicus curiae that this may lead to a public health emergency," the bench said. "This is a sorry state of affairs when it comes to implementation of Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, in the capital city".

Delhi has generated more than 11,000 tons of waster per day ***PHOTO: PTI***

> Situation of solid waste disposal in Delhi might lead to a public health emergency as more than 3,000 tons of solid waste remained untreated daily

The bench directed the secretary of the Union environment ministry to convene a meeting of officials of the MCD and the Delhi government for working out an immediate solution to the issue.

It posted the matter for further hearing on 6 September.

The apex court was hearing a matter related to the disposal of solid waste in Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR). *—PTI*

HARYANA GOVT DOCS' INDEFINITE STRIKE ENTERS 2ND DAY

CHANDIGARH, 26 JULY

The indefinite strike called by an association representing government doctors in Haryana that hit services in state-run hospitals entered its second day on Friday.

Haryana Civil Medical Services Association (HCMSA) launched the strike to protest the non-fulfilment of their several demands, including a career progression scheme. Marathon talks between the association and the government on Thursday failed to make much headway.

The doctors' demands include the formation of a specialist cadre for them and a career progression scheme that ensures parity with their central government peers.

According to the association, the doctors have to submit two bonds of Rs 1 crore each for admission to postgraduate courses. It has demanded that the amount be reduced.

The other demand raised by the association is to stop the direct recruitment of senior medical officers.

. *—PTI*

3 die, 6 fall sick due to diarrhoea in MP

UMARIA, 26 JULY

Three men, including a father-son duo, died due to diarrhoea and six others contracted the disease in two villages of Umaria district in Madhya Pradesh, an official said on Friday.

The area health supervisor has been suspended after the diarrhoea outbreak, while two other officials have been served show-cause notices, he said.

Tanoop Singh, 62, and his son Chudamani Singh, 32, died of diarrhoea in Belsara village. The disease, mostly caused by contaminated food or water, also claimed the life of Ramdev Singh, 65, from Karhi village on Wednesday, area medical officer Dr KL Baghel said.

Six others in Karhi are suffering from the infection, he said. Three of them are admitted to a hospital in adjoining Dindori district, while the rest are being attended at home, he said.

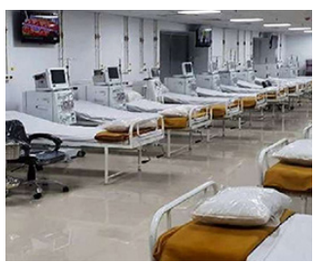


PHOTO: PTI

Asked about the cause of the outbreak, Dr Baghel said they suspect water contamination. However, he added that hand pumps are the only source of potable water in the two villages situated 2 to 3km apart and about 70km from the district headquarters.

The Public Health Engineering Department will test the water from the two villages, he said.

—PTI

IN MP, 4 DIE AFTER INHALING TOXIC GAS INSIDE WELL

KATNI, 26 JULY

Four people, including a man and his nephew, died due to suspected inhalation of a poisonous gas in a well in Madhya Pradesh's Katni, an official said on Friday.

The incident occurred in Juhla-Juhli village on Thursday evening, the official said.

One of the victims, Ram Bhaiya Dube, 36, entered the well to fit a water pump and suddenly fell unconscious, following which his nephew also entered the water body, he said.

When the duo didn't resurface, Rajesh Kushwaha, 30, a labourer, and Pintoo Kushwaha first disconnected the power supply to the well and entered it but fell unconscious similarly, the official said. *—PTI*

M'rashtra: 14 members rescued from tugboat off Alibag coast

MUMBAI, 26 JULY

All 14 crew members of a tugboat that had drifted in the Arabian Sea off the Alibag coast in Maharashtra's Raigad district have been rescued, a police official said on Friday.

The rescue operation of the crew from the small carrier operated by JSW Group was launched with the help of the Coast Guard, he said.

A chopper of the Coast Guard was engaged in the operation, which started around 9 am, and all the 14 crew members of the tugboat were safely evacuated, said Somnath Gharge, Raigad Superintendent of Police.

The Coast Guard chopper picked up the crew from the tugboat and safely dropped them at Alibag beach, he said, adding that all its 14 members are safe.

"A small carrier vessel operated by JSW got caught in the stormy weather today between Jaigarh and Salav as it drifted due to strong winds and low visibility," JSW Group had said in a statement on Thursday.

Police had said that the tugboat went adrift after its engine stopped functioning near the Kolaba fort off the Alibag coast on Thursday.

Raigad police, Coast Guard, and revenue officials were on alert to launch a rescue operation for the stranded boat, but were facing difficulties due to heavy rainfall, high tide and strong winds, Gharge said.

Indian Coast Guard personnel with the 14 Indian crew members who were rescued from the grounded bulk Carrier near Alibaug ***PHOTO: PTI***

—PTI

COMEBACK GONE WRONG

Gangster holds rally, sent back to prison

NASIK, 26 JULY

A gangster from Nasik, Maharashtra, was sent back to jail after a video of his celebratory rally following his release went viral on social media. Harshad Patankar's supporters organised a car rally with 15 two-wheelers participating from Bethel Nagar to Amdedkar Chowk in Nasik.

He was released from jail on 23 July under Maharashtra Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Slumlords, Bootleggers, Drug Offenders and Dangerous Persons Act (MPDA). The viral footage had Patankar waving to his supporters by standing out of the sunroof of a car.

The clips captioned 'comeback' went viral on social media.

Harshad Patankar and his supporters during the comback rally organised in Nasik, Maharashtra, on Friday ***PHOTO: SCREENGRAB***

The rally that was unauthorised had gotten the attention of the authorities, and Patankar was arrested again with six of his aides on charges of causing chaos and holding an unauthorised event. Reports mention that there are several police cases that have been filed against Patankar, including the charges of attempted murder, theft, and violence.

—Salar News

Nagpur: Bus gets stuck at rly crossing, 40 escape

NAGPUR, 26 JULY

Timely intervention by a loco pilot and locals saved the lives of 40 students after the school bus they were travelling on got stuck on railway tracks at a level crossing in Nagpur, an official said on Friday.

The incident occurred at Khaperkheda around 4pm on Thursday when the school bus driver did not stop even after seeing the red signal at the level crossing. When the bus was on the tracks, both gates of the level crossing closed as a train was to pass through the area, he said.

Within moments, panic and chaos prevailed at the road-rail intersection. Locals soon spilled onto the tracks in their efforts to signal the train driver to stop.

PHOTO: PTI

A railway official said a passenger train was going from Chhindwara in MP to Itwari in Nagpur at the time. Seeing the school bus in the middle of the level crossing, the gatekeeper alerted the officials through a walkie-talkie.

Sensing something was not right since many people had gathered on the tracks, the loco pilot applied the brakes and brought the train to a halt before level crossing. *—PTI*

MERA BHARAT MAHAAN

Two Indian teams, one with all the three members of Indian Army and the second, a Tri-Services team planted the Tricolor atop Mount Elbrus, the highest point of Europe during the 3rd CISM (Climbing for Peace) event in Friday xx
PHOTO: PTI

Kargil war heroes join to cherish 25 years of victory

A soldier paying homage at the Kargil War Memorial on occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Kargil Vijay Diwas in Dras on Friday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Twenty-five years after Indian bravehearts scripted a memorable victory for the country post winning decisive battles in icy heights of Kargil, the Indian Army is honouring the valour, indomitable spirit and supreme sacrifices made by them in service of the nation with a solemn celebration in Dras.

The silver jubilee celebrations of the Kargil Vijay Diwas will culminate in Dras on Friday amid a patriotic fervour.

The two-day event of the 'Kargil Vijay Diwas Rajat Jayanti Varsh' began on Thursday in Dras.

This significant milestone honours the valour and sacrifice made by the Indian armed forces during the Kargil War.

Over the past one year, numerous events have been held across India to mark the landmark occasion.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit the Kargil War Memorial on 26 July and pay homage to the bravehearts who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty, his office said on Thursday.

- The key highlights of celebrations include the battle reminiscence at Lamochen View Point, 'Vijay Bhoj', and 'Shaurya Sandhya

At Dras, Friday's events were graced by a large number of senior serving officers, gallantry awardees, veterans, and next of kin of the bravehearts who laid down their lives during the Kargil War.

The key highlights of today's celebrations included the battle reminiscence at Lamochen View Point, 'Vijay Bhoj', and 'Shaurya Sandhya', officials said.

At Lamochen View Point in Dras, a special event was held to remember the bravehearts of the Kargil War. The event commenced with a microlight aircraft demonstration followed by an audio-visual narration of the battles, vividly recreating the scenes of each confrontation against the backdrop of the very mountains where these fierce battles were fought, a senior official said.

The narrations were followed by reminiscences from war heroes themselves, bringing to life the bravery, indomitable spirit, and everlasting zeal of Indian soldiers.

This event was attended by war heroes, and wives and mothers of fallen soldiers who laid down their lives during the war.

Gen VP Malik (retd) was the chief guest for the event, accompanied by other Param Vir Chakra, Maha Vir Chakra, and Vir Chakra awardees.

The 'Gauravmayi Sanskriti' function was held to honour the braves, their families, and other esteemed guests.

"The event showcased the cultural diversity of not only Ladakh but entire India. It was a reflection of the vibrant culture, national spirit and patriotism of all Indians, providing a poignant reminder of the unity and resilience that define our nation," the Army said..

Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi was present along with Sunita Dwivedi, president of the Army Wives Welfare Association.

They interacted with the gallantry awardees, bravehearts, and families of those who made the supreme sacrifice during the Kargil War 25 years ago.

They also interacted with students of Ladakh and NCC cadets.

The Army said it expresses its heartfelt gratitude to all participants and the people of India for their unwavering support and patriotism.

The concluding events at Dras not only "honours the memory of our brave soldiers" but also "reaffirm our collective commitment to the nation's security and sovereignty", it said.

—PTI

LETTERS write to us at salar@salar.news

SALAR سالار

Dip in Indian vultures led to 500k human deaths

Once upon a time, the vulture was an abundant and ubiquitous bird in India.

The scavenging birds hovered over sprawling landfills, looking for cattle carcasses. Sometimes they would alarm pilots by getting sucked into jet engines during airport take-offs.

But more than two decades ago, India's vultures began dying because of a drug used to treat sick cows.

By the mid-1990s, the 50 million-strong vulture population had plummeted to near zero because of diclofenac, a cheap non-steroidal painkiller for cattle that is fatal to vultures. Birds that fed on carcasses of livestock treated with the drug suffered from kidney failure and died.

Since the 2006 ban on veterinary use of diclofenac, the decline has slowed in some areas, but at least three species have suffered long-term losses of 91-98 per cent, according to the latest State of India's Birds report.

And that's not all, according to a new peer-reviewed study. The unintentional decimation of these heavy, scavenging birds allowed deadly bacteria and infections to proliferate, leading to the deaths of about half a million people over five years, says the study published in the American Economic Association journal. "Vultures are considered nature's sanitation service because of the important role they play in removing dead animals that contain bacteria and pathogens from our environment - without them, disease can spread," says the study's co-author, Eyal Frank, an assistant professor at University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy. "Understanding the role vultures play in human health underscores the importance of protecting wildlife, and not just the cute and cuddly. They all have a job to do in our ecosystems that impacts our lives."

Frank and his co-author Anant Sudarshan compared human death rates in Indian districts that once thrived with vultures to those with historically low vulture populations, both before and after the vulture collapse. They also examined rabies vaccine sales, feral dog counts and pathogen levels in the water supply.

They found that after anti-inflammatory drug sales had risen and vulture populations had collapsed, human death rates increased by more than 4% in districts where the birds once thrived.

The researchers also found that the effect was greatest in urban areas with large livestock populations where carcass dumps were common.

The authors estimated that between 2000 and 2005, the loss of vultures caused around 100,000 additional human deaths annually, resulting in more than $69bn (£53bn) per year in mortality damages or the economic costs associated with premature deaths. These deaths were due to the spread of disease and bacteria that vultures would have otherwise removed from the environment. For example, without vultures, the stray dog population increased, bringing rabies to humans.

Rabies vaccine sales rose during that time but were insufficient. Unlike vultures, dogs were ineffective at cleaning rotting remains, leading to bacteria and pathogens spreading into drinking water through run-off and poor disposal methods. Faecal bacteria in the water more than doubled.

Of the vulture species in India, the white-rumped vulture, Indian vulture and red-headed vulture have suffered the most significant long-term declines since the early 2000s, with populations dropping by 98%, 95% and 91%, respectively. The Egyptian vulture and the migratory griffon vulture have also declined significantly, but less catastrophically.

The 2019 livestock census in India recorded more than 500 million animals, the highest in the world. Vultures, highly efficient scavengers, were historically relied upon by farmers to swiftly remove livestock carcasses. The decline of vultures in India is the fastest ever recorded for a bird species and the largest since the passenger pigeon's extinction in the US, according to researchers.India's remaining vulture populations are now concentrated around protected areas where their diet consists more of dead wildlife than potentially contaminated livestock, according to the State of Indian Birds report. Experts warn that veterinary drugs still pose a major threat to vultures. The dwindling availability of carcasses, due to increased burial and competition from feral dogs, exacerbates the problem. Quarrying and mining can disrupt nesting habitats for some vulture species.

Will the vultures come back? It is difficult to say, though there are some promising signs. Last year, 20 vultures - bred in captivity and fitted with satellite tags and rescued - were released from a tiger reserve in West Bengal. More than 300 vultures were recorded in the recent survey in southern India. But more action is required.

—PTI

Two decades ago, India's vultures began dying because of a drug used to treat sick cows ***PHOTO: SCREENGRAB***

This mineral, about 13,000 feet under the sea, emits dark oxygen

For decades, scientists have floated theories about dark matter, which is believed to hold galaxies together by its gravitational pull. The enigma of dark matter continues, and now scientists have discovered what they call dark oxygen on the ocean's floor.

A recent study published in Nature Geoscience, a journal dedicated to Earth sciences research, shows oxygen emitted from mineral deposits 4,000 meters (about 13,000 feet) below the ocean's surface on the seafloor of the Pacific Ocean's Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ). The depth is almost half the length of the tallest peak of Mount Everest.

The study by Andrew Sweetman, professor at the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) and team lead of the institution's seafloor ecology and biogeochemistry research group, provides evidence that there's an additional oxygen source on the planet apart from the oxygen produced from photosynthesis. Up until now, it has been well understood by scientists that the planet's only source of oxygen is from photosynthetic organisms like plants and algae that produce oxygen for humans and other animals to breathe. So what is the significance of this newly found dark oxygen, and what questions does it raise about the origins of life on Earth?

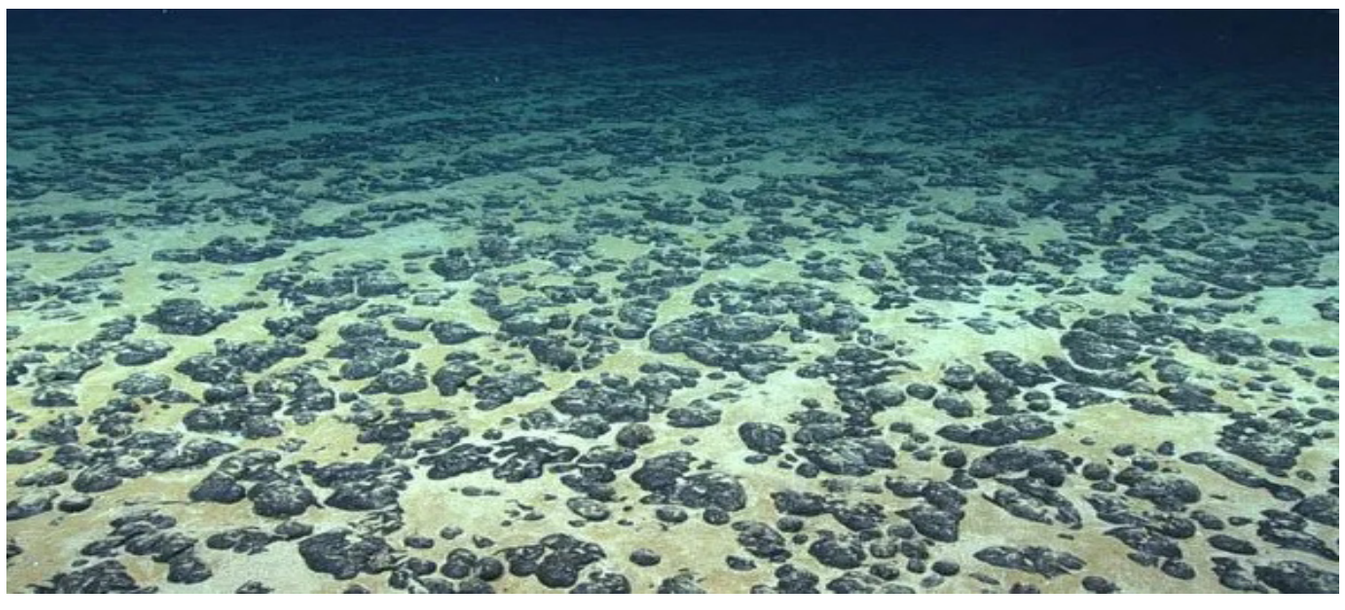
What is dark oxygen?

On the Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ), which spans 4.5 million square kilometres (1.7 million square miles) in the Pacific Ocean, there are coal-like mineral rocks, called polymetallic nodules, which typically contain manganese and iron. Scientists have found that these nodules produce oxygen without the process of photosynthesis. Minerals that produce oxygen in the darkness of the seafloor could possibly change scientists' view of how life began on planet Earth.

The other implication of this research is it potentially sheds light on where life began on the planet. This discovery has shown that, well, maybe there was another source of oxygen a long time ago and aerobic life or life that breathes oxygen could have persisted before the rise of photosynthesis — and if it's happening on our planet could it be happening on other planets too, Sweetman stated in a SAMS video.

How did they find the dark oxygen?

The discovery comes more than 10 years after the source of dark oxygen itself was found. The 2013 research mission was aimed at understanding how much oxygen was consumed by organisms on the CCZ seafloor. anders, mechanical platforms that can free-fall to the bottom of the seafloor, were sent down 4,000 meters (13,000 feet) to track how oxygen levels in the water decreased over with depth.



This potato-sized nodules are lumps of oxides of iron and manganese that also contains metals like cobalt and rare earth elements ***PHOTO: SPACE.COM***

However, what researchers discovered was that oxygen levels increased at the ocean bed. This surprised Sweetman and his team. Until now, scientists believed that the oxygen available in the deep ocean comes from the upper ocean and land, produced by plants, plankton and algae using the process of photosynthesis.

As a result, oxygen levels usually go down as one goes deeper. Not in this case. Thinking his measuring equipment was faulty, Sweetman got the equipment recalibrated and repeated the experiment several times over many years — with the same results.

Through more experiments over the years, they discovered manganese nodules were the source of oxygen production.

They brought these nodules back to the ship for testing and noticed they had an electric charge, the equivalent of an A battery. A process known as seawater electrolysis allows a charge to split seawater into hydrogen and oxygen. They observed this in their lab experiments.

What is the significance of the discovery?

Science works on the principles of verification, so these findings will need to be confirmed by other, independent experiments. But the research by Sweetman and his team suggests that some minerals do produce oxygen while not using sunlight.

The fact that we've got another source of oxygen on the planet other than photosynthesis has consequences and implications that are utterly profound, Nick Owens, director of SAMS, said.

This discovery also highlights the need to protect environments that self-produce oxygen, according to the researchers behind it.

To power the green economy we need to extract metals from the ground or potentially the deep ocean, Sweetman said.

So what we have discovered means that we're going to have to carefully think about if deep ocean mining goes ahead, where that mining should take place because this oxygen is likely being used in whatever quantity that it's produced by the ecosystem.

In addition, the implications of discovering another deep ocean source of oxygen production open the doors to revisiting how life began on Earth.

The fact that we've got another source of oxygen on the planet other than photosynthesis has consequences and implications that are utterly profound, Owens said.

—Courtesy, Al Jazeera

PHOTO: PTI

Sri Lanka's prez election to be held on 21 Sept

COLOMBO, 26 JULY

Sri Lanka will hold the presidential poll on 21 September, the election commission announced on Friday, ending the months-long speculation over the key contest which is likely to determine the future of economic reforms in the cash-strapped country. This will be the first election to be held in Sri Lanka after it plunged into economic bankruptcy in 2022. The government gazette issued on Friday said in terms of Article 31 (3) of the Constitution the election would take place on September 21 while the nominations would be accepted on 15 August. The election announcement set to end the balance term of former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who was ousted in mid-2022 in a popular public uprising. *—PTI*

South Africa gets first woman Chief Justice

CAPE TOWN, 26 JULY

South Africa appointed its first female chief justice on Thursday. President Cyril Ramaphosa named Mandisa Maya, the current Deputy Chief Justice, as the country's new most senior judge. Her term is due to start on 1 September , when she will replace Chief Justice Raymond Zondo as the head of the apex Constitutional Court. Zondo is retiring. Maya, 60, previously served as the judge president of the Supreme Court of Appeal, the second-highest court in South Africa, before her promotion to the Constitutional Court. She was the first Black woman to be appointed a judge of the Supreme Court of Appeal and the first woman to be appointed Deputy President and then president of that court. Ramaphosa nominated Maya in February. *—AP*

5 killed, 2 badly injured in Karachi shootout

ISLAMABAD, 26 JULY

Five people died after two groups exchanged fire at each other in Karachi's Defence area in Pakistan, ARY News reported. DIG South Asad Raza confirmed that a total of five individuals lost their lives while two others got injured after an exchange of fire between two groups in Karachi's Defence Nishat Commercial area. The deceased individuals were identified as Fahad Bugti, Naseebullah, Mir Mehsum Bugti, Mir Essa Bugti and Ali; meanwhile, the injured two are Mir Ali Haider Bugti, and Qaim Ali, according to the details, reported ARY News. Moreover, eyewitnesses reported that several people were injured during the violent altercation. *—ANI*

At least 36 killed in Hurricane Beryl in Texas

HOUSTON, 26 JULY

The number of Texas deaths after Hurricane Beryl came ashore and knocked out power to millions of residents climbed to at least 36 on Thursday as officials confirmed more people whose cause of death was at least partially due to heat-related causes in homes left without air conditioning. The latest confirmed deaths were nine in Fort Bend County, including four that were at least partially attributed to hyperthermia, according to the medical examiner's office. At least a dozen other residents in the Houston area also died from causes that officials attributed to complications from the heat and losing power. Most Houston residents had their electricity restored last week after days of widespread outages during sweltering summer temperatures. *—AP*

Kamala urges Netanyahu to end war in Gaza

She says, Israel has a right to defend itself in the ongoing war but how it does so matters

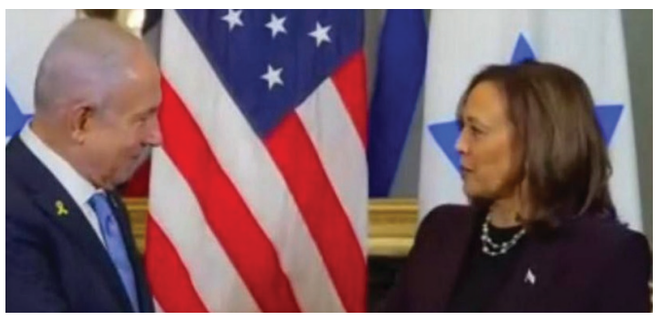
WASHINGTON DC, 26 JULY

US Vice President Kamala Harris has urged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to quickly conclude a ceasefire deal with Hamas and reach a "durable end" to the devastating war in Gaza, amidst mounting civilian casualties and the humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian enclave.

"Israel has a right to defend itself and how it does so matters. What has happened in Gaza over the past nine months is devastating," Harris, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, told reporters after her meeting with Netanyahu at the White House on Thursday.

Harris also stressed the need for a path to a two-state solution, while calling on Americans to be aware of the "nuance" on the conflict.

Netanyahu's meetings at the White House came a day after he gave a fiery speech to Congress, vowing "total victory" against Hamas, as thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters demonstrated outside. *—AP*



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Vice President Kamala Harris in Washington DC on Thursday *PHOTO: X/ @SPRINTERFAMILY*

Vance once vouched for lesser voting rights for childless people

In a 2021 appearance on Tucker Carlson's former Fox News show, Vance said that the United States was being run by "a bunch of childless cat ladies who are miserable at their own lives and the choices." In the resurfaced clip , Vance said, "It's just a basic fact — you look at Kamala, Pete Buttigieg, AOC — the entire future of the Democrats is controlled by people without children." *—Agencies*

All I can say is... Mr Vance, I pray that your daughter is fortunate enough to bear children of her own one day. I hope she will not need to turn to IVF as a second option. Because you are trying to take that away from her, too

-JENNIFER ANISTON, ACTOR

Attacking Kamala on basis of gender not helpful: Nikki

WASHINGTON, 26 JULY

Attacking Vice President Kamala Harris, presumptive nominee of the Democratic party, is not helpful, Republican leader Nikki Haley said on Thursday and insisted that she needs to be criticized based on her policies.

"It's not helpful. It's not helpful. I mean, we're talking about a liberal senator who literally has not accomplished very much and what she was given she didn't do much with. You don't need to talk about what she looks like or what gender she is to talk about that. The American people are smarter than that," Haley told CNN in an interview.

The White House on Thursday described as "disgusting" the increasing sexist and racist attacks on Vice President Kamala Harris which has intensified after she became the presumptive presidential nominee of the Democratic party." *—AP*

Obamas officially endorse Kamala for president

WASHINGTON, 26 JULY

Kamala Harris will be a "fantastic President of the United States," former president Barack Obama said on Friday, as he and his wife Michelle endorsed her and vowed to do "everything we can" to enable her to win the high-stakes elections against Donald Trump in November.

Harris, 59, launched her presidential campaign hours after President Joe Biden said he would be forgoing his bid for a second term.

The decision came after Biden faced weeks of mounting pressure to step aside following his startling debate performance against rival and former president Trump last month, which raised concerns about his fitness for a second term and ability to defeat his Republican opponent in November.

Obama, who didn't immediately endorse Harris following President Biden's announcement on Sunday, released a video to support the Vice President.

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Harris thanked the Obamas for their support and expressed gratitude for their decadeslong friendship.

Michelle, the former first lady, said she is proud of Harris and expects the upcoming election to be historic.

In a joint statement, the Obamas praised Harris.

With Obama's endorsement, Harris, who is of Indian and African origin, has secured support from all major Democrats and party leaders in Congress, including former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries. *—AP*

China, Russia stage joint bomber patrol

ALASKA, 26 JULY

Russia and China have staged a joint patrol over the north Pacific Ocean and the Bering Sea near the coast of Alaska.

The two countries have carried out several joint patrols in the past, and Russia regularly flies its bombers over the Bering Sea.

The patrol was the first that brought together bombers from both countries in the north Pacific area.

Moscow and Beijing said it was "not aimed at any third party", while the US-Canadian North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) said the bombers, which it intercepted, stayed in international airspace and were "not seen as a threat".

But Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski described the event as an "unprecedented provocation by our adversaries." Meanwhile, top diplomats from Southeast Asia met Friday morning in Vientiane with China's Foreign Minister for talks that come as friction continues to escalate over Beijing's growing effort to press its sweeping maritime claims in the South China Sea.

Several members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nation have disputes with China, which has led to direct confrontations that many worry could lead to broader conflict.

"One wrong step in the South China Sea will turn a small fire into a terrible firestorm," said Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi ahead of the talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. *—AP*

The patrol was the first that brought together bombers from both countries in the north Pacific area *PHOTO: RUSSIAN DEFENCE MINISTRY*

Ethiopia landslides: Death toll hits 257

ADDIS ABABA, 26 JULY

Search teams were still digging at the site of deadly mudslides in southern Ethiopia on Friday, as the death toll rose to 257, according to the UN humanitarian office.

Heavy rain triggered deadly slides on Sunday and Monday in a remote part of the country. The UN humanitarian office, known as OCHA, said in an update Thursday that the death toll could rise to as many as 500, citing local officials.

"More than 15,000 affected people need to be evacuated" from the area, it said.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is expected to visit the remote area on Friday. Mudslides there have been triggered by heavy rainfall in recent days. Abiy said earlier in the week that he was "deeply saddened by this terrible loss."

Photos from the scene show residents standing over the shrouded bodies of mudslide victims who are being pulled, one by one, from the muddy earth. Diggers have been using hand shovels to pick through the mud.

Many people were buried in the Gofa Zone of Kencho Shacha Gozdi district on Monday, as rescue workers searched the steep terrain for survivors from mudslides the previous day.

Deadly mudslides often occur in the wider East African region, from Uganda's mountainous east to central Kenya's highlands.

In April, at least 45 people were killed in Kenya's Rift Valley region when flash floods and a landslide swept through houses and cut off a major road. *—AP*

A man searches for survivors in the Kencho Shacha Gozdi district *PHOTO: GOFA ZONE GOVERNMENT OMMUNICATION AFFAIRS*

US arrests 2 Mexican cartel leaders

WASHINGTON, 26 JULY

Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada, a longtime leader of Mexico's Sinaloa cartel, and Joaquín Guzmán López, a son of another infamous cartel leader, were arrested by US authorities in Texas on Thursday, the US Justice Department said.

A leader of the powerful Sinaloa cartel for decades alongside Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, Zambada is one of the most notorious drug traffickers in the world and known for running the cartel's smuggling operations while keeping a lower profile.

A Mexican federal official said that Zambada and Guzmán López arrived in the United States on a private plane and turned themselves in to authorities.

The US government had offered a reward of up to USD 15 million for information leading to the capture of Zambada, who eluded authorities for decades. Zambada and Guzmán López oversaw the trafficking of "tens of thousands of pounds of drugs into the United States, along with related violence", FBI Director Christopher Wray said, adding that now they will "face justice in the United States".

"Fentanyl is the deadliest drug threat our country has ever faced, and the Justice Department will not rest until every single cartel leader, member, responsible for poisoning our communities is held accountable," Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a statement. *—AP*

Zambada, Joaquín Guzmán López *PHOTO: PTI*

Imran's party to protest for release of arrested leaders

ISLAMABAD, 26 JULY

Pakistan authorities on Friday braced for a possible showdown with supporters of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf after the party announced a countrywide protest for the release of all arrested party leaders.

Apart from the PTI, the rightwing Jamaat-e-Islami also announced a demonstration in Islamabad against the rising high cost of electricity and other commodities.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party will hold nationwide protests for the release of 71-year-old founder Khan and other arrested party leaders and workers.

Khan was arrested on 5 August last year after his conviction in the first Toshakhana corruption case filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan. Since then, he has been kept in jail in various cases. According to the PTI, it will hold a protest in front of the National Press Club in the capital, while the Jamaat-e-Islami plans to stage a sit-in at the famous F-Chowk facing the parliament building. *—PTI*

'Agreement with Russia is deal with devil'

KYIV, 26 JULY

- Kyiv continues to face difficult front-line conditions against Moscow's larger, better equipped army, as well as uncertainty over the level of future political support from the US

Signing an agreement with Russia to stop the war with Ukraine would amount to signing a deal with the devil, a top adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, as pressure mounts on the country to seek an end to more than two years of fighting.

A deal would only buy time for Russian President Vladimir Putin to strengthen his army and usher in another, potentially more violent chapter in the war, Mykhailo Podolyak told The Associated Press in an interview Thursday.

"If you want to sign a deal with the devil, who will then drag you to hell, well, go for it. This is what Russia is," Podolyak said. It is a view held across Zelenskyy's camp and reflected broadly among Ukrainians. But it also increasingly comes up against the current of Western pressure, as Kyiv continues to face difficult front-line conditions against Moscow's larger, better equipped army, as well as uncertainty over the level of future political support from Ukraine's closest ally, the US. *—AP*

Philippines to siphon off oil cargo from sunken tanker

MANILA, 26 JULY

There is no indication that a big cargo of industrial fuel oil stored in a tanker that sank in stormy weather in Manila Bay has started to leak, the Philippine coast guard said Friday, and plans are being firmed up to try to siphon off the highly toxic shipment to prevent a major spill that could reach the bustling capital.

The tanker Terra Nova had left Bataan province en route to the central province of Iloilo with about 1.4 million litres of industrial fuel oil stored in watertight tanks when it got lashed by huge waves and took on water. The crew struggled to steer the tanker back to port but it eventually sank shortly after midnight Thursday. The coast guard rescued 16 crewmembers but one drowned, coast guard spokesperson Rear Adm. Armando Balilo said. *—AP*

Gang kills at least 26 villagers in New Guinea

MELBOURNE, 26 JULY

At least 26 people were reportedly killed by a gang in three remote villages in Papua New Guinea's north, United Nations and police officials say.

"It was a very terrible thing … when I approached the area, I saw that there were children, men, women. They were killed by a group of 30 young men," acting Provincial Police Commander in the South Pacific island nation's East Sepik province James Baugen told Australian Broadcasting Corp. on Friday.

Baugen told the ABC that all the houses in the villages had been burned and the remaining villagers were sheltering at a police station, too scared to name the perpetrators.

"Some of the bodies left in the night were taken by crocodiles into the swamp. We only saw the place where they were killed. There were heads chopped off," Baugen said, adding that the attackers were hiding and there were no arrests yet.

PHOTO: PTI

UN Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said in a statement Wednesday that the attacks happened on 16 July and 18 July.

Turk said at least 26 people had reportedly died, including 16 children. "This number could rise to over 50, as local authorities search for missing people,"Turk said. *—AP*

HERITAGE SITE IN PALESTINE GETS UNESCO TAG

PARIS, 26 JULY

Amid the ongoing Gaza conflict, heritage site of Saint Hilarion Monastery/Tell Umm Amer in Palestine on Friday received the UNESCO tag and was simultaneously put on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The announcement was made during the ongoing 46th session of the World Heritage Committee in New Delhi. Saint Hilarion Monastery/ Tell Umm Amer in Palestine has been inscribed on World Heritage List and List of World Heritage in Danger, it was announced in the plenary meeting of the session. Various state parties from Lebanon, Turkiye, and Kazakhstan welcomed the UNESCO inscription of the heritage site. *—AP*

VIDEO GAMES

Actors on strike over AI threat

LOS ANGELES, 26 JULY

Major video game makers - like Activision, Warner Bros and Walt Disney - are facing a strike by Hollywood performers over the use of artificial intelligence (AI).

It follows a year and half of talks over a new a contract between the companies and a union representing more than 2,500 video game performers.

The two sides say they have agreed on several key issues, such as wages and job safety, but protections related to the use of AI technology remain a major hurdle.

The industrial action was called by the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (Sag-Aftra), which last year paralysed Hollywood with a strike by film and television actors.

The performers are worried about gaming studios using generative AI to reproduce their voices and physical appearance to animate video game characters without providing them with fair compensation.

However, the video game studios have said that they have already made enough concessions to the union's demands. *—BBC News*

Performers are concerned that generative AI could be used to reproduce their voices and physical appearance *PHOTO: ACTIVISION*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Rupee recovers from all-time low, rises 9P to 83.69

MUMBAI, 26 JULY

The rupee recovered from its all-time low level and appreciated 9 paise to 83.69 against the US dollar in early trade on Friday, amid a positive trend in domestic equities. Forex traders said foreign fund outflows from Indian equities following the government's decision to hike the tax rate on capital gains weighed on the local currency and restricted the upmove. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.72 against the American currency, then rose to 83.69 against the American currency, registering a rise of 9 paise from its previous close.. "The rupee remains under significant pressure, hovering near all-time low levels. This strain is due to the government's recent decision to hike the tax rate on capital gains. *—PTI*

Standard Glass Lining Technology files IPO with SEBI

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

Standard Glass Lining Technology Ltd, which manufactures specialised engineering equipment for pharmaceutical and chemical sectors, has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator SEBI to raise funds through an Initial Public Offering (IPO). Telangana-based company's IPO is a combination of fresh issuance of shares worth Rs 250 crore and an Offer For Sale (OFS) of up to 1.84 crore equity shares by promoters and other selling shareholders, according to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP). . The company may consider raising up to Rs 50 crore in the pre-IPO placement. If such placement is completed, the fresh issue size will be reduced. *—PTI*

Sterling & Wilson Energy bags orders worth ₹328 cr

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

Sterling and Wilson Renewable Energy on Friday said it has bagged an order to set up a 500x2 (1,000 MWhr) - standalone battery energy storage system plant in Rajasthan. The order entails engineering, design, procurement, erection, testing and commissioning of 500 x 2 (1,000 MWhr) - Standalone BESS plant in Rajasthan, a company statement said. The company, however, did not disclose the name of the company it got the project from. Additionally, the company also secured a 20 MW Floating Solar project in Karnataka from the same client, which marks the third such floating solar project the company is currently executing in the country. Total value of letter of intent for both projects stood at Rs 328 crore. *—PTI*

USFDA approves Sun Pharma's drug for alopecia areata

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd on Friday said the US health regulatory has approved its LEQSELVI (deuruxolitinib) drug for the treatment of adults with severe alopecia areata. The approval by the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) is for LEQSELVI (deuruxolitinib) 8 mg tablets, Sun Pharma said in a regulatory filing. Alopecia areata is an autoimmune disorder that can lead to unpredictable hair loss. It occurs when the immune system mistakenly targets hair follicles on the scalp, face, and sometimes other parts of the body, due to a breakdown in immune privilege. The approval is based on data from two multicenter, randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled Phase 3 clinical trials which enrolled a total of 1,220 patients with alopecia areata who had 50 per cent scalp hair loss *—PTI*

FPIs WITHDRAW $1.27B FROM INDIAN MARKETS

This comes after the Budget announcements for FY25

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

Since the Union Budget, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have withdrew about Rs 10,710 crore from the Indian stock market due to increased taxes on capital gains from equities investments and derivatives trades. FPIs sold stocks valued at Rs 2,975 crore on 23 July 23, Rs 5,130 crore on 24 July 24, and Rs 2,605 crore on 25 July, according to stock market data.

Anticipating a host of reform measures, FPIs had bought equities worth around Rs 18,000 crore between 12 and 22 July

The Budget has made certain major announcements with respect to capital gains tax whereby the rate of tax on

FPIs had bought equities worth Rs 18,000 crore last week *PHOTO: FREEPIK*

long-term capital gains (LTCG) is proposed to be made 12.5 per cent for all types of assets, irrespective of the transferor being a resident or a non-resident. "While this simplification of the capital gains regime is a welcome move, and in some cases the rates have decreased, the non-resident investors will suffer from a higher rate of LTCG tax across all types of assets. Even for FPIs, the tax rate for listed securities has been increased from 10 per cent to 12.5 per cent in case of LTCG and 15 per cent to 20 per cent in case of STCG," said a report from Nishith Desai Associates.

FPIs were sellers in January, April and May (cumulative selling of Rs 60,000 crore) and buyers in February, March and June (cumulative buying of Rs 63,200 crore). The reason for this divergence is that FII activity is influenced by external factors like US bond yields and valuations in other markets while DII activity is largely driven by domestic flows into the market. *—Salar News*

Forex reserves jump $4B to all-time new high

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

Surpassing the all-time high level achieved the previous week, India's forex reserves jumped by another USD 4 billion to USD 670.857 billion for the seven days ended July 19, the Reserve Bank said on Friday.

The overall reserves had jumped by USD 9.699 billion to an all-time high of USD 666.854 billion in the week ended 12 July 12.

For the week ended 19 July 19, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by USD 2.578 billion to USD 588.048 billion, the data released on Friday showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves increased by USD 1.329 billion to USD 59.992 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up by USD 95 million to USD 18.207 billion, the apex bank said.

India's reserve position with the IMF were unchanged at USD 4.610 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed.

—PTI

Regulatory board revises tariffs for petroleum pipelines from Aug

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has revised the tariff rates for third-party users of "common carrier" pipelines.

Under the PNGRB Act, the board is responsible for setting the tariffs for pipelines used by companies to supply oil and gas. Previously, pipeline tariffs were based on railway tariffs for moving petroleum products, but the board has now introduced independent criteria for determining pipeline tariffs.

The board has classified pipelines into three categories: non-bid pipelines commissioned before the PPPL (Petroleum Products Pipeline Transportation) tariff regulations of 2010 (i.e., before December 20, 2010), non-bid pipelines commissioned after the PPPL tariff regulations of 2010, and bid-out pipelines authorized before the PNGRB Amendment in PPPL Authorization Regulations, 2023.

- From the financial year 2025-26 (i.e., from 1 April, 2025), an annual escalation of 3.4 per cent will be applied based on a 10-year Compound annual growth rate

For pipelines commissioned before the notification of the PPPL tariff regulations in 2010, the transportation tariff for petroleum products (excluding LPG) will be 75 per cent of the basic railway freight, and for LPG, it will be 100 per cent of the basic railway freight as per the Railway Goods Tariff Circular 19 of 2018, with a one-time escalation of 17 per cent effective from the date these regulations come into force until 31 March, 2025.

From the financial year 2025-26 (i.e., from April 1, 2025), an annual escalation of 3.4 per cent will be applied based on a 10-year Compound annual growth rate of Wholesale Price Inflation on a rolling basis, unless there is a change in the WPI by 0.5 per cent.

—ANI

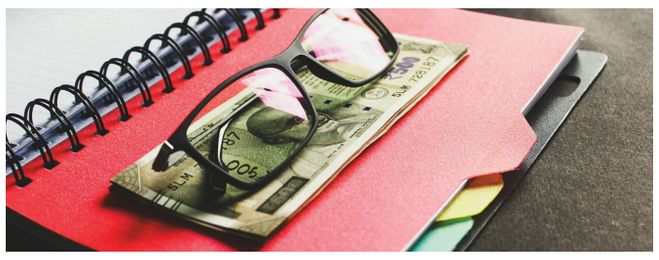
Goyal sets $50B target for leather industry by 2030

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal encouraged stakeholders in the Leather and Footwear industry to scale up the industry to USD 50 billion by 2030 during his interaction in Delhi.

He stated that the minister also encouraged the industry to showcase world-class products through a large-scale exhibition, inviting participation from domestic and international brands. He called for synergy within the industry to develop a Design Studio with state-of-the-art infrastructure and globally competitive footwear designs.

—ANI



The government has lowered fiscal deficit target to 4.9% *PHOTO: PIXABAY*

Budget shows govt's duty to reduce fiscal deficit: Fitch

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

Fitch Ratings on Friday said India's post-election budget confirms that the new administration remains committed to reducing the fiscal deficit for FY25, despite demands of coalition government.

In the FY25 budget, the government has lowered the Centre's fiscal deficit target for the year ending March 2025 to 4.9 per cent of GDP, from 5.1 per cent in February's interim budget.

The government's fiscal deficit target for FY25 is significantly below the 5.4 per cent that the ratings agency anticipated when it affirmed India's 'BBB-' rating, with a stable outlook, in January 2024.

The sustained focus on supporting economic growth through high public capex also points to continuity.

The long-term deficit target of 3 per cent of GDP under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2003 no longer appears to be a guiding objective, Fitch Ratings said. *—PTI*

India is inspiring lighthouse of growth: ITC CMD

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

With a consistent GDP growth rate of over 7 per cent, India has emerged as an "inspiring lighthouse of growth" amid a turbulent world grappling with geopolitical tensions and climate emergencies, ITC Chairman and Managing Director Sanjiv Puri said on Friday.

It has a "standout performance" as the world's fastest-growing major economy, which has not only evoked global respect but also points to its future promise, said Puri while addressing the annual general meeting of the company.

Experts predict that India is likely to contribute 18 per cent to the world's GDP growth in the next 5 years and could even touch 30 per cent between 2035 and 2040, he said. *—PTI*

India's 1st integrated agri-export facility to be built in Mumbai

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

In a significant move to bolster India's agricultural export and import capabilities, the Union Minister for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal approved the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA)'s project of 'Development of Export-Import cum Domestic Agricultural Commodity-Based Processing & Storage Facility at JNPA on PPP Mode' worth Rs. 284.19 Crore.

The JNPA is set to establish an all-in-one state-of-the-art agricultural facility at the port, spanning 67,422 square meters. This pioneering facility will address inefficiencies in logistics, reduce multiple handlings, and extend the shelf life of agricultural products.

Expected benefits include better prices for agricultural goods, job creation, and overall growth in the agricultural sector.

14 additional projects worth Rs 1,115 crore are underway *PHOTO: PIXABAY*

Currently, 14 additional projects worth Rs. 1,115 crores are underway, receiving Rs. 561 crore. *—ANI*

BUYERS ALL SMILES

Gold price drops by Rs 5,000 per 10 grams post Budget

NEW DELHI, 26 JULY

Gold prices have corrected sharply by 7 per cent or Rs 5,000 per 10 grams in the local markets after the government slashed basic custom duty on gold, and the lower costs will encourage more people to invest in the yellow metal, both as a commodity and as a financial asset, experts say.

Following the Budget announcement by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman that the government has slashed basic customs duties on gold and silver from 15 per cent to 6 per cent, gold prices crashed by Rs 3,350 to Rs 72,300 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday.

The precious metal prices continued the downtrend and plunged by Rs 650 on Wednesday. The yellow metal rates saw another steep fall on Thursday, nosediving by Rs 1,000 to settle at Rs 70,650 per 10 grams, as per the All India Sarafa Association.

After the duty cut, the yellow metal has declined Rs 5,000 per 10 grams or 7.1 per cent in the past three sessions, since July 23 when it had fallen Rs 3,350 to end at Rs 72,300 per kg.

Also, gold of 99.5 per cent purity declined by Rs 1,000 to Rs 70,300 per 10 grams on Thursday. It had also lost ground by Rs 5,000 per 10 grams in the three previous sessions.

On Thursday, silver rates also lost ground by Rs 3,500 per kg to Rs 84,000 per kg. In the past three sessions, the rates of the bright metal fell sharply by Rs 7,000 or 8.3 per cent to Rs 84,000 per kg from Rs 91,000 per kg. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Gold industry seeks 'One Nation, One Rate'

Kolkata, 26 July

The gold jewellery industry is advocating a 'One Nation, One Rate' policy, starting with a unified rate for Eastern India from August, an official said. All stakeholders have shown interest in the idea of a unified gold rate across the country, said Samar Kr De, President of the Swarna Silpa Bachao Committee. "We will begin with a single rate for Bengal and eastern India from August and have onboarded bullion sellers for this initiative," De said. He also noted that the recent 9 per cent duty cut was unexpected by the industry. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her budget proposals slashed import duties on gold and silver from 15 per cent to 6 per cent. Industry players said that the sharp duty cut will help eliminate illegal imports. However, there is a concern about whether the government has any other plan regarding the Goods and Services Tax (GST) concerning gold, according to industry sources. *—PTI*

NIFTY ENDS AT RECORD HIGH

Sensex jumped 1,292.92 points to settle at 81,332.72 *PHOTO: FREEPIK*

Market rebounds after 5 days of loss

MUMBAI, 26 JULY

Benchmark Sensex rebounded by 1,293 points while broader Nifty shot up nearly 2 per cent to a record high on Friday, cutting short the five-day losing streak on heavy value buying value-buying at lower levels and a rally in blue-chips like Reliance Industries.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,292.92 points or 1.62 per cent to settle at 81,332.72. During the day, it soared 1,387.38 points or 1.73 per cent to 81,427.18.

The NSE Nifty surged 428.75 points or 1.76 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 24,834.85.

All the Sensex shares except for Nestle closed in green.

Bharti Airtel was the biggest gainer, rising by over 4.51 per cent. Adani Ports, Sun Pharma, Tata Steel, HCL Technologies, Infosys, JSW Steel and Mahindra & Mahindra were the other big gainers.

Nestle was the only loser, closing lower by 0.07 per cent.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,605.49 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

After a sharp fall in intraday trade on Thursday, the BSE benchmark managed to recover some of the lost ground to settle 109.08 points or 0.14 per cent lower at 80,039.80. The NSE Nifty dipped 7.40 points or 0.03 per cent to 24,406.10.

In the past five days, the BSE benchmark Sensex tumbled 1,303.66 points or 1.60 per cent, while the Nifty declined 394.75 points or 1.59 per cent. *—PTI*

Tech Mahindra shares tank nearly 6%

New Delhi, 26 July

Shares of IT services firm Tech Mahindra on Friday slumped nearly 6 per cent after the company's revenues declined by 1.2 per cent during the June quarter. The stock tanked 5.52 per cent to Rs 1,445.50 on the BSE. At the NSE, it tumbled 5.60 per cent to Rs 1,444.25 apiece. The stock emerged as the biggest laggard among the Sensex and Nifty firms. Tech Mahindra on Thursday reported a 23 per cent jump in consolidated net profit to Rs 851 crore for the June 2024 quarter. The Mahindra group company had posted a net profit of Rs 692.5 crore in the year-ago period. The company, which began a three-year strategic restructuring under a new head recently, saw its revenues decline by 1.2 per cent to Rs 13,005 crore during the reporting quarter. Its new managing director and chief executive Mohit Joshi said the performance in FY25 will be better than the year-ago period. *—PTI*

THE PROMISING INDIANS AT PARIS

117 athletes will carry India's hopes at Paris Olympics

PARIS, 25 JULY

The Indian contingent taking part in the Athletes' Parade during the Opening Ceremony of the Paris Olympics on Friday, to be led by PV Sindhu and Achanta Sharath Kamal, will have 78 athletes and officials from 12 sports disciplines.

All the athletes who made themselves available for the ceremony will be part of the Parade, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) said.

"IOA President PT Usha and Chef-de-Mission Gagan Narang have given top priority to athletes in the composition of the contingent in the Athletes' Parade." the IOA said. "Many have competitions on Saturday and IOA has been respectful of their decision to prioritise preparation and to not take part in the Opening Ceremony."

Besides Sindhu and Sharath Kamal, who will be the flag-bearers, other prominent athletes include archer Deepika Kumari, boxer Lovlina Borgohain, table tennis player Manika Batra and tennis player Rohan Bopanna.

Rower Balraj Panwar has his race on Saturday morning and so, he is not taking part in the Athletes' Parade. Track and Field, weightlifting and wrestling teams are yet to reach Paris. The Indian men's hockey team has also a match against New Zealand on Saturday, and thus three reserve players will participate in the ceremony.

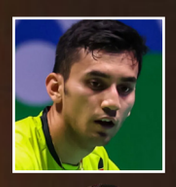
—PTI

BADMINTON | TIME: 12 PM

MEN'S SINGLES GROUP STAGE

HS PRANNOY, 32, DELHI

Prannoy's stamina and ability to play long rallies sets him apart from the rest. He won bronze at 2023 World Championships, 2022 Asian Games, and Commonwealth Games.



LAKSHYA SEN, 22, UTTARAKHAND

Sen is only the second player who will be representing India in men's singles at the Paris Olympics. Sen's world ranking is 19 now.

WOMEN'S SINGLES GROUP STAGE

PV SINDHU, 29, ANDHRA PRADESH

This will be her 3rd appearance in the Olympics Games. She is the only Indian woman to win 2 Olympic medals.

MEN'S DOUBLES GROUP STAGE

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy
Chirag Shetty

WOMEN'S DOUBLES GROUP STAGE

TANISHA CRASTO, 21, GOA

She won Bronze medal in 2023 Dubai and Gold in 2024 Selangor event

ASHWINI PONNAPPA, 34, KARNATAKA

She missed Tokyo 2020, but is back with in 2024 with Tanisha Crasto.

ROWING | TIME: 12.30 PM

MEN'S SINGLE SCULLS HEATS

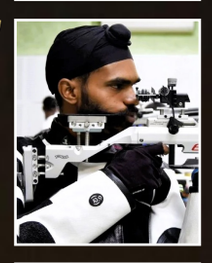
BALRAJ PANWAR, 25, HARYANA

Panwar secured India's first rowing quota in an Olympic games by finishing third in the men's single scull event at the 2024 World Asian and Oceanian Olympic Qualification Regatta with a time of 7.01.27 minutes. The Indian Army rower missed a bronze medal at the Asian Games last year

SHOOTING | TIME: 12.30 PM

MEN'S SINGLE SCULLS HEATS

10m Air Rifle Mixed Team qualification
Sandeep Singh, 28, Madhya Pradesh
Arjun Babuta, 25, Chandigarh
Elavenil Valarivan, 24, Tamil Nadu
Ramita Jindal, 20, Haryana



10M AIR PISTOL MEN'S QUALIFICATION | TIME: 2 PM

- Sarabjot Singh, 22, Haryana
- Arjun Cheema, 23, Punjab

10M AIR PISTOL WOMEN'S QUALIFICATION | TIME: 4 PM

- Rhythm Sangwan, 20, Haryana
- Manu Bhaker, 22, Haryana

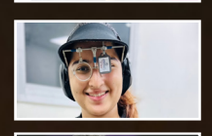


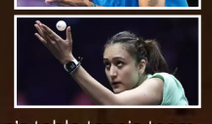
TABLE TENNIS: TIME: 6:30PM

MEN'S SINGLES

- Sharath Kamal
- Harmeet Desai

WOMEN'S SINGLES

- Manika Batra
- Sreeja Akula



India will compete in the men's and women's table tennis team event at the Olympics for the first time at the Paris Games

TENNIS | TIME: 3.30 PM

MEN'S SINGLES: 1ST ROUND MATCH

SUMIT NAGAL, 26, HARYANA

Nagal won India's first match in singles at the Olympics pre–match in 25 years. Nagal is the sole Indian entrant in the singles draw. Nagal's fondness for playing on clay might help him to clinch the Tile this time

MEN'S DOUBLES

ROHAN BOPANNA, KARNATAKA

At 44 years of age, Bopanna will be India's most experienced face in Paris. He is the second oldest tennis player of all time to qualify for the Olympics.

N SRIRAM BALAJI, 34, TAMIL NADU

The agility and firepower of Balaji will be an added advantage for the doubles. Balaji also defeated Alexander Erler and Lucas Miedler, two of Austra's top-50 players, along with his German partner Andre Begemann.

BOXING | TIME: 7 PM

WOMEN'S 54KG

PREETI PAWAR, 20, HARYANA

Asian Games bronze medalist Pawar will try to make her mark on the Olympics debut this time. She won silver medal in Youth Asian Championships 2021.

HOCKEY | TIME: 9 PM

MEN'S GROUP B

INDIA V NEW ZEALAND

The Indian hockey team has a strong past records where they won 8 gold medals in Olympics. The last success in Tokyo Games will boost up their confidence this time. They have won the Asian Games four times (1966, 1998, 2014 and 2022)

All eyes on boxers Nikhat, Lovlina at Olympics

Indian boxers have fetched 3 medals in Olympics so far

PARIS, 26 JULY

World Championship medallists Nikhat Zareen, Lovlina Borgohain and Nishant Dev will wade through draws that are at best tricky in their quest to achieve India's best Olympic medal tally in boxing when the competition kicks off here on Saturday.

Indian boxers have fetched three medals in the Olympics so far, all bronze. While Vijender Singh remains the only male to have achieved the feat back in the 2008 Beijing Games, women stars MC Mary Kom (London, 2012) and Borgohain (Tokyo, 2021) later added to the overall haul.

The 28-year-old has an uphill task ahead as three of the top medal contenders in the light-flyweight (50kg) division

Nikhat Zareen, Lovlina Borgohain

PHOTO: PTI

-- China's Wu Yu, Thailand's Chuthamat Raksat and Uzbekistan's Sabina Bobokulov -- are in her half.

The seasoned Amit Panghal (51kg) has had a rollercoaster of a ride this Olympic year -- from not being the first choice in his weight class in the national team to making the cut for Paris in the one and only chance he got.

The immensely talented Nishant, one of the most consistent performers in the Indian squad, has got the best draw. With a first round bye, the debutant will take on Ecuador's Rodriguez Tenorio in the pre-quarters on Thursday.

Borgohain will be chasing history, to add to her 69kg bronze. The Assamese boxer, who has bulked up to 75kg, will clash with Norway's Sunniva Hofstad in the first round.

> **We have to create heroes to change the culture. These heroes will also drive a cultural change, encouraging more young Indians to pursue sports as a profession**
>
> -Vijender Singh , Boxer-turned-politician

However, Borgohain has a tough test waiting for her in the quarterfinal in the form of Chinsese Li Qian, the reigning Asian Games champion and also a two-time Olympic and world medallist. Although Borgohain defeated Qian at the world event last year, she lost in the previous two meetings -- Asian Games and the Czech Grand Pri. *—PTI*

How wave forecasting impact surfing match?

TEAHUPO'O (TAHITI), 26 JULY

The search for the perfect wave has been a part of surfing culture for decades, with surfers traveling from location to location in their quest for the best swells. But with the development of surf forecasting— the prediction of wave swell behavior and breaking— that search has gotten much easier.

This year, it also determines the four days that surfers competing in the Paris Olympics in Tahiti, French Polynesia, will paddle into the ocean in their pursuit for the gold medal. Surf forecasting is often considered a branch of meteorology and oceanography as it uses the same tools and methods adopted in weather forecasting and the study of the ocean. Forecasters monitor wind and storms that blow over the ocean — sometimes thousands of miles out at sea — transferring their energy in the water and creating most waves. They then calculate how the storms will move over the water and how long they'll take to reach shores.

Some old-school forecasters do their calculations by hand, but software has been developed to help semi-automate the data that creates forecasting models. Forecasts can be fairly accurate up to 10 days in advance, said Nathan Cool, a wave forecaster and creator of WaveCast. *—AP*

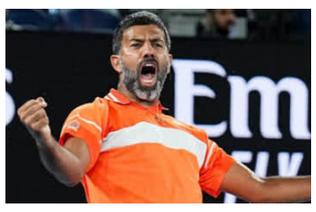
Bopanna-Balaji eye huge success

PARIS, 26 JULY

Rohan Bopanna, the oldest player in the Indian contingent at 44, might not have a strong partner he had in previous Olympics, but in N Sriram Balaji, the veteran tennis player has a comrade, who can punch above his weight in Paris when they compete in men's doubles event.

India's first and only tennis medal in Olympics came back in 1996, when Leander Paes created history with a singles bronze at the Atlanta Games.

To expect Bopanna to deliver the goods with Balaji, who has barely started playing at the



Rohan Bopanna *PHOTO: ANI*

N Sriram Balaji *PHOTO: PTI*

big stage, is implausible. Yet, they are preparing in the best possible manner, given the limitations.

They competed as a team in Hamburg and skipped the Umag tournament in Croatia to give themselves a few practice hours at Roland Garros, a venue where Bopanna has some great memories.

At this very venue he had won his first Grand Slam when he triumphed in mixed doubles with Gabriela Dabrwoski in 2017. *—PTI*

SINDHU, SATWIK-CHIRAG HOPE FOR GOLD MEDAL

PARIS, 26 JULY

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will hope to deliver the country's first-ever badminton gold, while PV Sindhu would look to solidify her status as one of the greatest athletes with an unprecedented third successive Olympic medal when Indian shuttlers begin their campaign at the Paris Games here on Saturday.

Sindhu will need to summon her big-game temperament to add another medal to the silver and bronze she won in the last two editions and Satwik and Chirag will aim to continue their love affair at the French capital, having won the men's doubles super 750 crown here this year.

Satwik-Chirag, seeded third, are placed in Group C with world No 6 and reigning All England champions Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Rian Ardianto of Indonesia, world No 31 German pair of Mark Lamsfuss and Marvin Seidel and world No 46 French shuttlers Lucas Corvee and Ronan Labar. Sindhu, on the other hand, has been patchy in the run-up to the Games. However never shy to try out new things, she parted ways with her Korean coach Park Tae-sang, who guided her to a bronze in Tokyo.

With the likes of An Se Young, Chen Yu Fei, Tai Tzu Ying and Carolina Marin standing in her way, the road to a medal will be hard but Sindhu has always been a big match player. She will meet World No. 75 Kristin Kuuba of Estonia and No 111 Fatimah Razzaq of Maldives in the group stage. However, she is likely to face two Chinese -- He Bingjiao and Olympic champion Chen Yu Fei in the knockout stage. *—PTI*

Womens' Asia Cup: India beat B'desh to enter finals

India Women's S Verma plays a shot against Bangladesh Women in the 1st Semi-Final of Women's Asia Cup, in Dambulla, On Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

DAMBULLA, 26 JULY

Pacer Renuka Singh's three-wicket burst followed by Smriti Mandhana's brisk unbeaten fifty underlined India's ruthless performance as the defending champions walloped Bangladesh by 10 wickets and marched into their record-extending ninth women's Asia Cup final, here on Friday.

India will face the winner of the second semifinal between Pakistan and Sri Lanka, in the title clash on Sunday.

Shafali (26 not out, 28b, 2x4) and Mandhana (55 not out, 39b, 9x4, 1x6) were on song from the word go, as India overhauled the target of 81 without breaking a sweat. India ended up at 83 for no loss in 11 overs.

Renuka (3/10) upfront and left-arm spinner Radha Yadav in the middle overs (3/14) rattled Bangladesh with excellent spells.

The Indians, on their part, fielded vastly better compared to the previous games and Shafali was particularly impressive.

Her forward-diving catch to oust Rabeya off pacer Pooja Vastrakar was from the top draw.

There was a good little partnership of 36 runs for the seventh wicket between Sultana, who was dismissed for the first time in this tournament, and Shorna Akter (19 not out, 18b, 2x4) but it came way too late to have any match-course altering effect. *—PTI*

Punjab FC signs Croatian midfielder Filip

MOHALI, 26 JULY

Indian Super League club Punjab FC on Friday announced roping in Croatian midfielder Filip Mrzlijak ahead of the upcoming season. The 31-year-old Mrzlijak played for Croatian club HNK Gorica last season in the Croatian Football League and will make his first appearance in India. Having begun his youth career with Dinamo Zagreb in 2008, Mrzlijak made his senior professional debut with the club in 2011. He has played for clubs such as Radnik Sesvete, Lokomotiva, Pandurii Târgu Jiu, Astra Giurgiu, Dinamo Bucure vti and FC Ufa before moving to Gorica last season. Mrzlijak has scored 13 goals in 237 competitive fixtures, whereas his best came in the 2020-21 season with Ufa when he netted four goals in 16 matches. *—PTI*

BREAK-DANCING

Girl who fled Taliban makes debut at Paris

CHATEAUROUX, 26 JULY

Olympics is all about triumph of human resilience and Afghan break-dancer Manizha Talash embodies this spirit. It's been three years since she fled the Taliban and is now all set to perform gravity-defying moves when break-dancing makes its Olympic debut in Paris.

The 21-year-old Talash crossed the border into Pakistan after Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in 2021 before settling in Spain as a refugee the following year.

However, not even in her wildest imagination, she thought that the hobby she picked up in her troubled

Talash worked at a beauty salon in Madrid before taking up break-dancing full-time *PHOTO: X/@TEENVOGUE*

homeland will make way to the biggest sporting spectacle on earth.

The International Olympics Committee changed Talash's life forever by including her in its refugee squad for the Paris Games. Break-dancing has been added to the Olympic programme to attract more youth and there are not many better than Talash to promote the new entrant.

Talash worked at a beauty salon in Madrid before taking up break-dancing full-time.

At the Paris Games, as many as 36 athletes are part of the refugee team representing over 100 million displaced people. Talash is also glad that her family has moved to Spain with her. The European country is now her second home. Her mother, she revealed, follows Indian films keenly.

Break-dancing requires supreme fitness and that is what she has been working on for the last six months. *—PTI*

Learnt a lot of things from skippers: SKY

PALLEKELE, 26 JULY

Newly-appointed Indian T20 captain Suryakumar Yadav says he has enjoyed being a leader on field despite not donning the captain's hat, adding that he learnt the tricks of the trade from different skippers over the years.

Suryakumar was appointed as India's T20 captain last week ahead of Hardik Pandya after Rohit Sharma's retirement from the format.

Suryakumar's first assignment will be the three-match T20 series against hosts Sri Lanka starting here on Saturday.

Indian cricket is set to embark on a new era under Suryakumar and new head coach Gautam Gambhir.

Both Suryakumar and Gambhir share a strong bond since Kolkata Knight Riders days as they played together in 2014 for the franchise. "He (Gambhir) knows how I work, what is my mindset when I come to practice sessions. I also know how he tries to work as a coach. It's all about the lovely relationship we have and very excited to see how it goes forward," the Mumbai batter said. *—PTI*